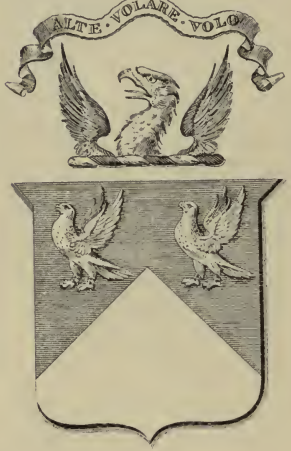

INCIDENTS IN INDIA

INCIDENTS IN INDIA

AND

MEMORIES OF THE MUTINY

WITH SOME RECORDS OF

ALEXANDER'S HORSE AND THE 1ST BENGAL CAVALRY

Services of General W.R.E. Alexander

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CONTENTS.

INCIDENTS IN INDIA

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

When you know that a man has spent about forty years amongst Indians in India, somehow or other you begin to imagine that he must have acquired at least a little ferocity, if only in countenance.

This was the mistake I was guilty of, when first I was expecting to meet the subject of these pages, General W. R. E. Alexander, late Commander of the 1st Bengal Cavalry. It was therefore a pleasing disappointment to find him a genial, hearty man of about middle height, bright and active, with a sunny smile which half prepared one for the crisp, firm speech, that only an Irish tongue can crystallize.

Years of friendship have proved to me

that the stirring times of the Mutiny, and other scenes of violence, have softened and mellowed a character that is only partly revealed by a most attractive manner.

General Alexander is soon and easily tempted to plunge into the past, and bring forth stories of camp and field. The following narrative is in some measure the result of these incursions.

Everything about his home reminds General Alexander of some battle or incident.

If you go into the dining-room, where the walls display many portraits, the General begins: "That's my brother; that's my brother-in-law; that's my father; that's my grandfather; that's—"

And you draw breath, and wonder how long it will take to get back to Alexander the Great.

But though General Alexander does not give us his pedigree to quite so remote a personage, yet it is his proud boast that, for two hundred and fifty years, members

of his family have served with distinction under the British Crown; if not in war, then in law, or the Church.

One of the General's most famous ancestors was Sir William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Stirling, a peerage he himself claims to inherit as next-of-kin surviving.

This illustrious relative was Secretary of State for Scotland, and founder of Nova Scotia, as shown in "Memorials of the Earl of Stirling and the House of Alexander," a work which has found a place in the Family History Section of the Library of Her Majesty the Queen.

But to return to the portraits.

"This is my father," says the General, pointing to a fine oil painting of a stern soldier with one arm. "There was a curious circumstance connected with his service."

Appointed a cornet in the 24th Light Dragoons in February, 1816, and promoted to a lieutenancy in March, 1818, he was put on half pay in July of that year, and

continued to draw his money for twenty-eight years till his retirement by sale in 1846. However, in June, 1820, he obtained permission from the War Office to accept a cavalry cadetship with the East India Company, thus continuing in the pay of two services for a long period.

As captain in command of the 4th Irregular Cavalry, General Alexander's father went to Cabul with the force under Sir John (afterwards Lord) Keane, in 1838, and was mentioned in despatches as having with his regiment "rendered essential service to the army during the campaign," and obtained his brevet majority.

Subsequently he commanded the 5th Light Cavalry during the Sutlej campaign in 1846-7, and in 1848-9 with the same regiment joined the force under Sir Hugh Gough.

In the first action at Ramnuggur a round shot from the enemy's fire struck his sword arm and rendered him *hors de combat*.

On the field the wounded arm was am-

putated, after the manner of those times, while he smoked a cigar!

General Alexander's brother-in-law, Lieutenant Elliot, was also severely wounded at Ramnuggur when the Sikhs were driven across the river, and took up their position at Chillianwallah.

If we turn to the portrait of a rather quiet, affable-looking gentleman, we learn that it is no less a personage than General Blair, V.C., C.B., General Alexander's cousin, and Mrs. Alexander's brother.

"When and how did he win his Victoria Cross?"

The following story is a summary of the answer.

It was in 1857, when our hold on India was only maintained by the action of men prompt to think and bold to do.

Blair was at Neemuch, and on the 12th of August, eight or nine desperate mutineers, driven to bay, sought refuge in a house, fastening themselves in, evidently determined to sell their lives dearly.

It was most essential that they should

be dislodged. The short twilight was creeping on, and the men were hidden from view in the murky interior of the building.

Undismayed by any consideration of personal safety, and thinking nothing of numbers and their advantageous position, the gallant officer, sword in hand, burst open the door, and, single-handed, drove the rebels to the roof.

Severely wounded, he kept up the unequal conflict, with steaming forehead and bleeding wounds, till they were completely routed, the darkness aiding the escape of those who eluded their impetuous pursuer.

Two weeks later, Blair again signalised himself in unequal conflict by his reckless courage.

On this second occasion he charged unaided a crowd of rebels and cut his way among them, till, in making a stubborn thrust, the blade of his sword snapped. A terrible blow on his right arm left him in the crowd, shattered and almost disarmed, to get back to his friends

as best he could; but in this he succeeded, and rejoining his troop he led them sword-hilt in hand, and dispersed the mutineers.

Thus he won the Victoria Cross.

Several ladies, not less heroic for being more beautiful, have their portraits in this gallery of the brave, chief among them being Mrs. Alexander as a young woman, combining in her features beauty and gentle firmness. And it is very sad to think that of all these faces there is not one but has been clouded with sorrow and tears for lost loved ones in the Great Mutiny.

The grandfather of these warriors was General Kennedy, C.B., who served under the East India Company for sixty years, and whose two sons, both generals, are still living. His wife died in India in 1884, aged ninety-six. Her name was a household word throughout the Bengal Presidency for many years. She was a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and her memory still survives her. This was the

lady whom the Prince of Wales honoured on his visit to India in 1876.

A grand reception was arranged when His Royal Highness visited Benares, where Mrs. Kennedy lived, and many friends urged her to attend, but she said she was too old, and put many excuses in the way. However, she was so loved and respected by all classes, natives and Europeans, that she was urged till she yielded consent.

Mrs. Alexander, who was staying with her at the time, playfully said: "Now, Grannie, you will have to make a speech, as the Prince is sure to speak to you." But her only reply was, "Nonsense, my dear, he won't take any notice of an old woman like me."

Well, the great day arrived, and Mrs. Kennedy with her granddaughter attended the reception.

After the preliminaries had been exhausted, sure enough the Prince asked to see Mrs. Kennedy. The dear old lady walked forward, and the Prince, leaving

the dais, came to meet her, took her by the hand, and shook it heartily, saying that he was glad to make her personal acquaintance. All she could reply, being quite overcome, was, "God bless you, God bless you!"—and what better could she have said?

"What made you first choose the Army as a profession, General?"

"Well, at first I had a strong desire to become a clergyman, but this wore off and the red coat and the soldier's life claimed me, and I entered the service when I was sixteen years six months and three days old."

"And what was your first service?"

"I received the Punjaub medal and was at the battle of Goozerat.

"When the Sikhs were driven to Chillianwallah, my regiment, the 53rd Native Infantry, was quartered at Lahore, not many miles from Ramnuggur, and we were ordered off to the front at once.

"We were halted at a river about fifteen

or twenty miles from Goozerat, there to protect a bridge of boats, which was fortified to prevent the Sikhs attacking our rear."

"You no doubt remember some great military heroes as well as their battles?"

"Oh, yes. The way I met Sir Hugh Gough and Sir Patrick Grant at Goozerat was something of an incident.

"From the bridge of boats we heard the guns on the morning of Goozerat, and I obtained my commanding officer's consent to ride over and join in the action. That gentleman, who had given *himself* permission, was already starting for the fight. I therefore mounted my horse, a splendid spirited bay Arab, and rode away.

"On the road I was joined by another officer also hurrying to join the force. He was riding a wretched 'country-bred' which showed signs of fatigue and could scarcely get along; so at the rider's request I laid hold of his reins and kept my horse close to his, almost dragging his poor tired-out beast along till we reached the army,

arriving at the rear of the force just as a great commotion was at its height owing to a body of Sikh cavalry (whom we, by a miracle, had escaped) having charged in amongst the camp followers.

"My friend left me to join his regiment, while I went to find my future brother-in-law, young Lane, of the 5th Light Cavalry, at that time adjutant of his regiment.

"Everyone knows that the battle of Goozerat was a decisive victory, the enemy being completely routed. Well, after it was over, each regiment, with the exception of those detailed to follow up the retreating foe, under Sir W. R. Gilbert, encamped on the ground it had reached, and I, being tired with my long ride and the day's adventures, slept soundly that night.

"The next morning the 5th Light Cavalry was ordered to scour the battle-field and see if any guns or ammunition had been left, or if there were any stragglers hanging about.

"Naturally I accompanied Lane, and in the course of our progress we went by the

tents of Sir Hugh Gough and his staff. The hero (whose sun was now bright after the eclipse of Chillianwallah) came out, and the whole regiment, as well as those in the adjoining tents, who had also turned out, gave vent to volley after volley of cheers, and it was a sight to be remembered, to see the grand old man, as, touched to the heart, he stood, hat in hand, bowing his acknowledgments.

"Another hero was there too—Sir Patrick Grant. Lane said to me, 'You had better tell the Adjutant-General you are here, and ask if you may remain.' I did so. Sir Patrick's curt, bluff reply was: 'You had better join your regiment *at once* the same way you came,' adding, by way of mingled warning and congratulation, 'Your commanding officer is also here in hospital badly wounded, so he cannot go back with you.'

"I had to obey orders, but I was in the battle of Goozerat!

"Of course I afterwards learned what all the world knows, that Sir W. R. Gilbert

followed the Sikhs to the River Jeelum, where they surrendered, to become our allies, if not our saviours, at the Great Mutiny."

CHAPTER II.

CAMPAIGNING IN BURMAH.

General Alexander was in the Burmah campaign of 1852-3. As lieutenant he commanded the Ramghur Irregular Cavalry, and was present with the land column at the relief of Pegu and other stockades. But it was at the taking of the stockade of Thoma that he most signally distinguished himself. We give the account in his own words :—

"The fort of Pegu, where a small garrison was quartered, was besieged by the Burmese. As their supplies ran short, and they were unable to replenish, urgent application was made to the officer commanding the forces for assistance. An expeditionary force, consisting of artillery, infantry, and my Irregular Horse, was

organized, and despatched with instuctions to push on as rapidly as possible and relieve the garrison.

"As we neared Pegu, various conflicting rumours were heard, some giving the enemy the capture of the fort, others that, at our approach, they had raised the siege and were retiring.

"On arriving at Pegu we found the latter to be the correct version. Our people were safe, so we returned to head-quarters and received orders to proceed to Prome, which then marked our frontier boundary.

"From this place various expeditions were made, one of them leading to the capture of the stockade of Thoma.

"I was ordered to cross the Irrawaddy River with the cavalry. The river is broad, deep, and rapid, even in the dry season. Small boats only were provided, so that the horses had to be swum over, the men in the boats holding the horses' bridles.

"It was a wretched business, and a

whole day was occupied in the difficult task. Two horses only could accompany each boat, and they strongly objected to the adventure. Some refused to enter the water; others plunged and reared, almost pulling the men out of the boats, while others were so frightened, that on getting into deep water they gave up every attempt at swimming and were drowned; the loss of each horse meaning that the services of their riders were lost also, for no horses were procurable in Burmah.

"However, having got across with these exceptions, my orders were to push forward and join a force consisting of some of the 18th Royal Irish, some of the 80th Foot, some native infantry, and a few sappers, under Major Edwards.

"None of us knew a word of Burmese, and without a guide or interpreter we had a difficult task before us, knowing only the name of the place where the force was halted.

"There was no road, but we followed a path some distance up a rocky hill, which

narrowed till we could only proceed in single file to the hill-top, where a huge rock completely blocked our progress, and we were forced to retire the way we came.

"But here another difficulty presented itself, for the defile was too narrow to turn our horses in, so I passed the word down for the rear men to commence backing, which, with much trouble, was accomplished, till we could turn round and ride back to our original ground and the camp. Then I went to Prome and reported the fix I was in.

"The Military Secretary was surprised to see me back, and said I should have joined Major Edwards under any and every circumstance, but I told him the route he had sent us was simply impossible, and suggested that he should provide flat-bottom boats to convey us, horses and all, round the rocky promontory, and we would find our way somehow or other to the desired position.

"After further trouble and some ob-

jections, this was accomplished, and we made a fresh start to find the force, at last reaching their camp in pitch darkness, quite worn out with our few days' hard work. However, after a hospitable reception, followed by a good night's rest, we were ready for anything the next morning.

"Soon after daybreak Major Edwards started for Thoma; the stockade, a very strong one, was occupied by the enemy in full force; while our business was to dislodge them and rid the neighbourhood of Prome of their presence.

"The infantry led the way, the cavalry followed in the rear. The road was merely a cart-track through thick jungle.

"Half-way on the road the order came, "Cavalry to the front;" so I pushed ahead to keep a look-out for the enemy and send back word of any discoveries. Soon I heard a great hum like that of a multitude. No one had the least idea what was the cause, but in a short while we came upon the stockade of Thoma quite unexpectedly.

Then we knew that the hum was caused by the enemy's departure, and were only just in time to stop some carts laden with food, ammunition, and arms.

"I left some men in charge and rode on to the stockade, being the first to enter, and found myself in possession after only one shot had been fired. I had the carts brought in and then reflected on my position.

"Here I was, with fifty mounted men, in a large stockade with dense jungle right up to the walls of it; jungle, too, which was infested with an enemy who might at any time collect and attack me from all sides at once.

"Naturally, I hoped the infantry column would be able to find us without losing its way, but till they came I was in a most dangerous position, and fully realized it.

"However, after an hour or so of suspense, our friends appeared, and though Major Edwards congratulated me on what I had done, I was thankful to make the place over to him, especially as, when

night came on, the fun began, and our foes stole up and commenced firing on us. They did not cease till morning, when it was light enough for the infantry skirmishers to drive them away.

"This they did unassisted by the cavalry, who could have done nothing but present themselves as targets for the Burmese marksmen."

In 1856, Captain Alexander was vested, in addition to his military duties, with civil powers in the disturbed district of Sonthal (Kurukdeah).

Bands of rebels under a number of different chiefs were engaged in plundering wherever a favourable opportunity offered, and, having active and intelligent scouts, received such timely notice of the approach of the troops that they escaped to the jungle and there lay concealed. But detachments were so cleverly posted by Captain Alexander at different points, that they were completely hemmed in, and at midnight on May the 17th, 1856, Cap-

tain Alexander and Lieutenant Thompson marched with a detachment of Grenadiers and a small party of Irregular Cavalry to seize the two Soubahs, Booka Manjee and Bhyroo Manjee, who were reported by spies to have returned to their homes.

They arrived at Booka Manjee's home at 3 a.m., to find that he had managed to slip out into the jungle just before their arrival, a fire being still burning on the floor of his house. But better success awaited them at Bhyroo Manjee's house, for they not only captured him and a spy, but recovered an immense quantity of plunder, in the shape of bullocks, cows, goats, grain, etc., this being, it appeared, the chief provision depôt of the marauders.

The march was continued, success following success, till nearly all the rebels were taken and the insurrection completely quelled.

For all this the thanks and approval of the Government in India and the

Honourable East India Company were received, and special mention was made of Captain Alexander's services on this occasion.

CHAPTER III.

THE INDIAN MUTINY.

THE next year, 1857, saw the outbreak of the great Mutiny, and during its course, on into 1859, General Alexander was going from place to place, sometimes occupied in eluding the bloodthirsty rebels, sometimes in following them up to disperse them and foil their intentions. His life and that of his beloved wife was spared over and over again, while near and dear ones perished around them. Indeed, it seems nothing short of miraculous that not only did he escape with his life, but that during his whole service of over thirty-three years he never received even the slightest wound—save, of course, those heart-wounds, when loved ones were torn from him by battle or by mutiny.

Although the purpose of this narrative

is not to give any connected history of events, it is perhaps necessary to refer to the outbreak of the Mutiny, and its supposed causes, for the sake of clearness.

The Indians doubtless had grievances under the Honourable East India Company, whose British charter gave them governmental authority which was upheld by their own standing army; but, despite grievances, they had much to thank Englishmen for. Their prosperity was greater, their prospects brighter than ever before. Their troops had been trained by British officers, and were skilled in European tactics; and it was the very power and method thus put into their hands which, during the Mutiny, were turned upon their givers.

A strong religious influence underlay the ostensible reasons for rebellion, which was seen in the unfounded rumour believed by the Indians that their caste was to be broken and defiled by the biting of cartridges greased with cows' and pigs' fat.

Cartridges then were different to car-

tridges now. They had to be torn open and their contents put into muzzle-loading guns; but it need scarcely be said that the statement that the cartridges were coated with the hated grease had no foundation in fact.

An additional explanation of the outbreak is that a prophecy was cherished that on the centenary of Clive's great victory at Plassey, the government would revert to the natives and the foreign yoke would be thrown off. No doubt the hope of compelling a fulfilment of this prophecy was the mainspring of the Mutiny. At any rate, about a year before the outbreak, General Alexander was himself told by a native sergeant in the Ramghur Light Infantry Battalion at Chota Nagpore, to which he was attached, that this prophecy was actually contained in one of the native religious books; and we can easily imagine, with this known, what intrigues and plotting would be rife at the great Mohammedan centres, Delhi and Lucknow.

About the summer of 1856, Captain Alexander was ordered to rejoin his old regiment, the 53rd Native Infantry; but, before doing so, took a long holiday, and did not actually join till about Christmas, 1856. With Mrs. Alexander he went down to Calcutta to await the arrival from England of her two sisters and their mother, Mrs. Blair. When they came, the ladies went to Cawnpore, the Captain proceeding to join his regiment, then on its march from Lower Bengal to Cawnpore, which place was reached about the beginning of March, 1857, the ladies being by that time comfortably settled in their new home.

But this was not long to continue, for Captain Alexander was told off for detachment duty with two companies, and, accompanied by his wife, proceeded to support the civil authority and guard the treasure at an outlying station called Ooraie, about eighty miles from Cawnpore, the River Jumna running between the two places. Lieutenant Tomkinson accom-

panied him as subaltern; Mrs. Blair and her two daughters remained in their home at Cawnpore.

The weather was intensely hot, and marching by no means an agreeable pursuit, and we can imagine their pleasure on arriving at Ooraie and rejoicing in the shelter of a friendly roof.

It was at this time that the sinister rumours of disaffection became rife, and one can easily realize their disturbing effect. First, the story of the prophecy, then the desire of the natives to make it come true, with consequent fermentation, till, early in March, 1857, a most remarkable and significant incident occurred.

A chowkeydar, or village policeman, of Cawnpore went up to another in Futteghur and gave him two chupatties, little unleavened cakes, the common food of the country; he ordered him to make others, and give two to each of the five nearest chowkeydars with the same order, and in this way a signal was passed from district to district with wonderful rapidity, and of

course gave rise to suspicion and anxiety, as the following quotation from a Calcutta newspaper will show:—

"Are all the chowkeydars about to strike for wages; or is anybody trying a new scheme for a parcel dawk? Is it treason or is it jest? Is there to be an explosion of feeling or only of laughter? Is the chupatty a fiery cross or only an indigestible edible, a cause of revolt or only of colic? Is the act that of a malcontent or a fool?" etc.

There was nothing in the cake, and no message accompanied it, facts the more ominous, since they prove that the recipients must have understood the sign without explanation.

Captain Alexander was on the best of terms with his men and had every reason to believe they were attached to him; but he could not but be aware of the disturbed state of their minds. The detachment was like a smouldering volcano. However, cause for real alarm did not appear at their Station, which, with the whole district,

was under the civil charge of Captain Brown of the Madras Army, who was daily expecting his wife and sister from England; and they shortly arrived, passing through Cawnpore on their way. The only other gentlemen at Ooraie were an Englishman (in appearance very like a native) with his wife and children, and a half-caste.

At the end of March, Captain Alexander and his wife returned to Cawnpore on leave of absence, and stayed during the whole of April.

On account of the heat it was the custom to rise very early, about daybreak. A walk, ride, or drive for exercise would occupy the early morning till it was time to return home to "chota hazree," or little breakfast. By this time the sun was up, and comfort out-of-doors impossible; so there was nothing for it but to remain indoors and practise keeping cool till sunset. Then more riding or driving or a stroll to the band-stand to chat with friends awaiting the dinner-hour, which covered

most of the evening, and found everyone ready for bed about half-past nine. In winter-time the doors were open all day, and it was possible to get out at any time.

In April, 1857, General Alexander's regiment, the 53rd Native Infantry, gave a ball to the Station, and during the dance rumours were passed from mouth to mouth of disquieting reports ; but no one dreamed then of a general mutiny. That evening was the last before our friends returned to Ooraie, and they little thought it was the last they would spend on earth with their beloved relatives.

The next day they set out, and it seems now almost like an omen that, after proceeding some distance on the way, they returned for another "good-bye," and then parted for ever.

On arrival at Ooraie things appeared much as usual. The new bayonet drill had just been introduced into the army, and Captain Alexander had, in the course of duty, to learn it from the drill instructor.

We can imagine him standing in front of the flourishing bayonet entirely at the mercy of the non-commissioned officer, who might shortly be found among the rebels, and we wonder what, had he foreseen events, his state of mind would have been. But the man was one of the old soldiers who had served under him seven years before, and it must not be supposed that all the natives favoured the mutiny. Their officers did not think so, for at one Station, when a detachment was disbanded because of suspected disaffection, some of the officers were so touched at the sight of the shame of those who had lived and fought with them so long, that they laid down their own swords and belts along with the arms of their men.

At last the pent-up forces burst forth. Restraint was no longer possible. "On the 11th of May," writes General Alexander—"I remember the day well—we heard of the outbreak at Meerut, where there was a large garrison. In addition to one native cavalry and two native

infantry regiments, there were a regiment of Lancers and two British infantry regiments, as well as a large body of horse and foot artillery.

Of course the details of the revolt did not immediately become known to our friends, but the wildest exaggeration of rumours could not outdo the actual facts, and from the first it must have seemed that our Indian empire trembled in the balance, and that the lives of our people were to be forfeited.

The story of Meerut may be briefly referred to here to show the tiger-like ferocity of the Sepoys. On the 9th of May, eighty-five troopers were paraded to receive sentence of court martial for refusing to use their cartridges. The penalty was ten years' imprisonment, and they were marched off in chains to gaol. The next day, Sunday evening, the native regiments turned on their officers and broke open the gaol to release the prisoners. The prison was fired, and more than a thousand convicts released, to swell, with the rabble of

the town, the ranks of the mutineers. Europeans without distinction were attacked; ladies and children being brutally murdered before the English troops came up. The alarm was given during Church parade, and the rebels at once fled towards Delhi. Some were overtaken and cut down, but the majority made their escape in the darkness of the night, only betraying their course by the blazing fires they left behind at the villages which lay in their route.

The pen trembles, as I try to record the horrors of that midnight march of demons. Women who had recently arrived in India and were in the early joy of reunion with their loved ones were slaughtered and horribly mutilated. Families, just retired to rest on the Sunday evening, were dragged from their beds by the rebels as they pursued their progress of murder and madness. Oh, night of horrors, shame and death!

We can imagine our friends in their isolated position at Ooraie after the first

report of the Meerut massacre. News arrived day after day of some fresh outbreak, with its accompanying slaughter of officers, women, and children. Every day brought new alarm and increased anxiety.

After three weeks of this terrible strain came the beginning of their own sorrows. On the 1st of June, Captain Alexander sent under the command of his subaltern a company with the treasure to Gwalior for safety. Remarkable to relate, the journey was successfully accomplished, but in returning, the mutineers being abroad in every direction, Lieutenant Tomkinson thought the wisest course was to leave his men and escape to some place of safety, such as Agra. He made some progress and was almost in sight of the desired haven, having been fairly treated by the villagers; but alas! a body of mutineers passing, he was betrayed and killed by the bloodthirsty rebels, to whom life and youth and hope were as nothing.

By this time Captain Alexander was persuaded that something must be done

to find a refuge from the blaze of fire around. He felt, as no outbreak had yet occurred at Cawnpore, and the troops were not disbanded, that that might prove a safe resort for his wife ; so he wrote to the General Officer in command, a personal friend, asking for an escort for Mrs. Alexander. The reply was very ominous. His authority was almost gone, and he advised their remaining at Ooraie.

Cawnpore being thus closed, they thought of Jhansi, about seventy miles off, where most of the troops were under a native chieftainess—the Ranee—and were of a better class of men than the ordinary natives, besides which there was a Native Irregular Cavalry regiment.

Overlooking the town and cantonment was a large and strong fort, and this seemed a place of safety ; so much so that Captain Brown, the officer in civil charge, decided to send his wife and sister there, and strongly urged Mrs. Alexander to accompany them. She pleaded hard, with noble self-forgetfulness, to remain by her

husband and share his dangers, so that a friendly compromise was effected between husband and wife, to the effect that nothing should be done till news was received as to the state of Cawnpore. Mrs. and Miss Brown, therefore, left for Jhansi without Mrs. Alexander. Four days after they, with every officer, lady, and child, were butchered without mercy in the fort where they had taken shelter. The bodies of these unfortunate people being afterward submitted to every horrible indignity and finally thrown on a dunghill.

"From all this," writes General Alexander with deep emotion, "my dear wife escaped. A life spared to be devoted to the God who protected her, while praise for ever belongs to Him for His love and care."

Poor Captain Brown was heartbroken, stunned, and dazed. Only four days parted from those he loved above all on earth, and then, through the crime and treachery of men, parted for ever.

On the 4th June, a letter was received from Mrs. Alexander's sister telling of the

suspense reigning in Cawnpore. This letter was written in the greatest mental distress and hourly dread of the worst, disclosing a condition of affairs that forbade any hope of removal there. In this direction also she was saved from the worst of deaths, for on that very day, the 4th of June, the native regiments at Cawnpore mutinied, and a period of fearful horrors commenced under the arch-fiend Nana Sahib.

For any who are unacquainted with the details of the Cawnpore outbreak it is necessary to explain that Sir Hugh Wheeler withdrew from the cantonment and entrenched himself with the Europeans in an open plain under the inadequate cover of some empty barracks. Here, for a long time, they held out, returning the enemy's fire as briskly as possible for about four days, but after that it was considered inadvisable to exhaust the magazine, as the effect on the sheltered rebels was only slight.

The heat was intense, and what with fright and want of room and care several

ladies died, one of them being a sister of Mrs. Alexander. Many officers were sunstricken from exposure to the hot winds.

The distress was so great that none could offer a word of consolation to his friend or minister to another's wants. The dead bodies of officers and ladies were put outside the verandah in the rain, to await midnight burial in a well beyond the entrenchment, and thus make place for the living, who were much pressed for room; the buildings being so badly riddled that every corner was considered a great object.

The enemy at last resorted to firing live shells well heated in order to set fire to the officers' tents in the compound and the thatched roof of the barrack. In this they succeeded, for on the 13th of June the flames began to spread from the south side, fanned by a strong breeze. It was impossible to remove the sick and wounded, and about forty of them were burnt to death in the fiery terror.

Most of those who escaped found shelter

from the shot and shell under the walls of the entrenchment, covered by boxes and cots; but the fearful heat caused many deaths through apoplexy. Picture the unfortunate people sleeping by turns in the open air at night and held in constant terror by the shells which could be seen whirling through the air like falling stars to burst where they fell.

At length Nana Sahib sent a message to General Wheeler offering to allow the Europeans to go to Allahabad in safety if he gave up the stores and treasure in his camp. This offer was accepted, and an agreement drawn up in writing and signed, sealed, and ratified by the solemn oath of the Nana.

But alas for the trust reposed in such a villain! About 450 people left the entrenchments and proceeded to the river-side. The boats were loaded, and as they were putting off from the banks the cowardly rebels fired into their midst! Some were killed, some fell overboard, others attempted to escape by swimming;

but the rebels kept up the fire during the whole of the day, and even through the night. Those not killed by the firing were brought back to Cawnpore, where the men were shot. The women were reserved, close prisoners, for the final and most fearful act in the tragedy of Cawnpore.

Meanwhile, General Havelock was marching on the city with his relieving force, and when Nana heard of the successful approach of the British troops, he determined on the murder of the whole of the European women and children in his charge.

The following extract from a newspaper dated July 17th, 1857, describes a visit to the scene of the slaughter :—

"I was directed to the house where all the poor miserable ladies had been murdered. It was alongside the Cawnpore hotel where the Nana lived. I never was more horrified. The place was one mass of blood. I am not exaggerating when I tell you that the soles of my boots were more than covered with the blood of

these poor wretched creatures. Portions of their dresses, collars, children's socks and ladies' round hats lay about saturated with blood, and in the sword cuts on the wooden pillars of the rooms long dark hair was carried by the edge of the weapon, and there hung their tresses, a most painful sight. I have often wished since that I had never seen them, but sometimes wish that every soldier was taken there, that he might witness the barbarities our poor countrywomen had suffered. These bodies were afterwards dragged out and thrown down a well outside the building, where their limbs were to be seen sticking out in a mass of gory confusion. Their blood cries for vengeance, and should it be granted us to have it, I only wish I may have the administration of it.

"I picked up a mutilated Prayer-book. It had lost the cover, but on a fly-leaf was written, 'For dearest Mamma, from her affectionate Tom, June, 1845.' It appears to me to have been opened at page 36 in the Litany, where, I have but little doubt,

those poor dear creatures sought and found consolation in that beautiful supplication. It is here sprinkled with blood. The book has lost some of its pages at the end, and terminates with the 47th Psalm, in which David thanks the Almighty for his signal victories over his enemies, etc."

"This Prayer-book belonged to my dear wife's mother," writes General Alexander, "and is now in our possession." A mournful reminder indeed of those loved ones, who died in faith, but who now await the sure and certain and glorious resurrection.

As all the world knows, the well where the bodies were thrown is a sacred place. It is surrounded by a beautiful garden, kept up at the Government expense. On the well are inscribed these words :—

"Sacred to the perpetual memory of a great company of Christian people, chiefly women and children, who near this spot were cruelly massacred by the followers of the rebel Nana Dhoondopunt of Bithoor, and cast, the dying with the dead, into the well beneath, on the XV day of July, MDCCCLVII.
"'These are they which came out of great tribulation.'"

In this way Mrs. Alexander was bereft

of her loved ones, an experience, truly, that must remain more vividly impressed on her memory than her own privations and sufferings, of which we have yet to tell.

But before going back to our friends whom we left at Ooraie we will follow the story to Allahabad, the headquarters of the East Indian Railway in the North-West Provinces, situated at the junction of the two great rivers, the Ganges and Jumna. There was at this station a large native garrison, while the fort was very strong, but a long way from the cantonment (that part of the town where troops reside). The larger portion of the guard was a detachment from the native troops, and these were augmented by some European gunners and a small staff for engineering and ordnance work. In the station were several civil officers scattered about in various places between the fort and cantonment.

When rumour was rife of disaffection, and before its actual outbreak, three troops

of the 3rd Oude Irregular Cavalry, under a European officer, were detached from the Lucknow district as a protection for Allahabad and as a check to the native infantry regiments. Europeans generally, as well as the Government, had confidence in these irregular cavalry regiments. The three troops mentioned, as the disturbances increased, were, with a detachment of native infantry, ordered to occupy the road leading from the cantonments to the bridge of boats across the Ganges, and there prevent the mutineers from crossing into or escaping from Allahabad.

So great was the feeling of satisfaction at Allahabad, that whilst other troops mutinied, these made vehement protestations of loyalty and devotion, demanding to be led to Delhi against the rebels, and they were publicly thanked by the Governor-General in Council. All this made the large population of European residents—the merchants with their wives and families—less watchful than they might have been.

But alas for false peace! Alas for the word of the Hindoo and Mohammedan! On the evening of the 6th of June the officers of the various regiments were, quite unsuspicious of danger, seated at mess as usual, the doors and windows being open because of the heat, the gaiety of youth and the pride of beauty illuminating the scene. Suddenly an alarm bugle, a preconcerted signal, was heard. Volleys were fired into the rooms. Many fell at the tables, others rising to escape were met at the doors by the perfidious Sepoys and butchered as they tried to pass out. A scene of life and happiness being instantly turned into one of death and horror.

The native infantry detachment at the bridge of boats, hearing the firing, mutinied also and advanced towards the bridge.

The officer in command of the cavalry at once turned out his men, the soldiers who were trusted and praised! The order to mount was obeyed. Heading them he cried "Charge!" suiting the action to the word and riding straight at the mutineers;

but alas, he rode alone, and rode to his death! He was greeted by a volley, and the gallant young fellow fell a lifeless corpse. One bullet entered his heart, and so close was the fire that his coat was burnt.

Either from shame or remorse his own men prevented the mutilation of his body and carried it to the fort, where any who escaped the carnage had found shelter.

This brave young fellow was General Alexander's only brother, well known in India at the time as Paddy Alexander. Although only twenty-eight years of age, he had already distinguished himself in other battle-fields, and General Alexander's testimony to his character is, "He was noble-hearted, affectionate and generous, and well-beloved by all who knew him." Facts which, alas! counted for nought with the treacherous rebels.

The account of the burial of this young hero is given from a letter written by Dr. Stevens from Allahabad the day after its occurrence:—

"Divine service was performed at 12 noon, and in the evening our chaplain had arranged for prayers to be read in the room set apart for a garrison chapel. The melancholy duty of burying poor Alexander's remains was to be performed afterwards. He, poor fellow, lay in a dooly at the main guard, just as he had been brought into the fort. I went and saw his lifeless body, clothed in the picturesque uniform of the Irregular Cavalry. There he lay with the lack-lustre eye that had sparkled with merriment the last time we met, not twenty-four hours before. The heart that beat with hope and joy pierced with the bullet of a dastardly traitor, and that arm which had wielded his sword with such bravery, and the limbs, booted and spurred, with which he urged his gallant charger to his own untimely fate; all lay still and motionless now! Truly he looked like 'a warrior taking his rest,' with tales of his martial deeds around him.

"The day passes on, the evening service is over, and now a few of us proceed

to one of the ravelins where a grave has been dug by a party of European volunteers. The shades of evening have closed over the fort, and we wend our way by the light of a lantern. The body is brought, no useless coffin encloses it, but it is placed quietly by the grave.

"'I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord,' is repeated by the clergyman, and the solemn words sink deep into the hearts of all present. The service proceeds :—

"'Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower. . . .'

"We lower the body slowly into its narrow dwelling-place.

"'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.'

"And thus we leave him.

"No doubt all went from that scene with grateful hearts, and with a desire to be up and doing 'while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.'"

CHAPTER IV.

FROM OORAIE TO CALPEE.

WHILE the foregoing and other great and stirring events were going on around, the Mutiny had not yet spread to Ooraie. About twenty miles lower down the banks of the Jumna is Calpee. It had a strong and well-constructed fort overlooking and commanding the river. To this city Captain Alexander was ordered to proceed with his remaining company, in order to sustain confidence among the peaceably disposed of the inhabitants, lest the bad characters should give themselves up to plunder. But before leaving, the half-caste assistant to Captain Brown, the Commissioner, was sent to obtain a report on the state of affairs.

By the time of his return the baggage

had been packed, and the men were drawn up on the road, prepared for the march.

The assistant's report was that all was quiet at Calpee, and there was no need for reinforcements. The order was therefore countermanded, and Captain Alexander communicated the decision to the troops.

It was the match to light the blaze; they immediately broke out into mutiny. With a shout they declared they would not stay, neither would they allow Captain Alexander and his wife to remain, but they must be prepared to go at once with them. Some went off then and there to rejoin the regiment, while some fired their muskets in open defiance. The older men, however, gathered round their respected companion and captain, and declared their intention to protect him.

He argued that it was no good his going with them, if they would not obey orders. They replied, "You had better come with us; it will be safer for you both."

So Captain Alexander returned to the house to his wife, who had naturally

become very anxious during his protracted absence. They then decided that they would go with the men. Captain Brown lent his buggy for Mrs. Alexander to travel in, and they started off on a journey not knowing its issue.

The older men gathered round the conveyance, the younger keeping close watch, with loaded muskets, to frustrate any attempt at escape. It was a terrible march, enough to put the strongest courage to the test.

A halt was made at a well, the men as they drank insisting, despite objection, on their prisoners drinking with them. Refusal was useless, with the loaded muskets pressing close around them, and so they unwillingly drank with their captors.

We may judge of the position when we learn that the poor lady, pointing to her husband's loaded pistol, said, "When you see any sign of treachery, shoot me."

The journey was resumed, and when about fifteen miles had been traversed, a halt was called for the night.

The heat was dreadful, and in the buggy almost unendurable. What meaning and intensity were given to the words: "They that watch for the morning."

At daybreak the journey was resumed, and when the sun was up, the travellers, arriving at a well, halted.

The men had been travelling without the least discipline, and without uniform except their belts. They mounted camels or rode in carts, sang, shouted, and spoke with rudeness and disrespect to the native officers and non-commissioned officers, but all this did not interfere with their devotions, for they drank at the well, washed themselves, and *said their prayers*. Under the circumstances, it is hard to imagine their ideas of a God.

Seeing the mutineers engrossed with their occupations, our friends ventured to drive forward, but were at once called back. Then one of the native officers came up quietly, and, in a whisper, told them to drive on slowly till sufficiently far ahead, and then to race for their lives.

This course was pursued, but not with-

out the greatest fear of failure. On they went, slowly, then quicker, till under a blazing sun the fugitives dashed into Calpee at 7.30 a.m., out of reach of their distanced captors—a race for life indeed.

Captain Alexander's orderly, Sepoy Sunooman Pandy, who had gone before with the baggage, met our friends at the gate, and was greatly distressed at the indignities that had been practised. Captain Alexander then retired with his wife to one of the rooms in the fort, till the men should be on the point of arriving.

He then went to the gate to meet the rebels as they came in, two or three at a time, and a more extraordinary or distressing scene perhaps never was witnessed. Some of the soldiers were veterans, having served for ten, twenty, thirty, and even forty years, men who were looking forward to promotion as a matter of course, and to whom a pension was, till now, a certainty. Every man of them knew well that by this act of mutiny and treachery the hopes of years were dashed to atoms, the reward of years of faithful service was lost. They

were men to be pitied, for in their hearts they were certain that the rebellion would consummate in a fiasco.

These whilom heroes of Afghanistan and other expeditions came up to Captain Alexander crying and sobbing like little children found out in a fault. He said,—

"Separate yourselves from the rebels, and stay with me."

"Oh, sir," they replied, "we cannot, we dare not, we are forced to go to Cawnpore. If we stayed here, there would be no safety for you or the lady. We must go."

They departed, crossing the river by the bridge of boats to the Cawnpore side and encamped there. And sad though it was to see them depart, it was a great relief to find that they left without doing any harm, and even without saying an uncivil word.

But the matter was not yet over, for towards evening Captain Alexander proceeded to his usual ablutions. Just at the interesting moment when he was seated in the bath, scantily arrayed in a pair of bathing drawers, his orderly came

in search of him. The man who was arranging his leathern water bottle for the refreshing shower, paused, as the orderly approached saying, "Sir, some of the men have returned, and wish to see you."

"Impossible, I am just taking a bath, I shall be ready soon."

"Sir," he answered, looking very grave, "come at once."

"This is very awkward. I must put on some clothes," urged the captain.

"Sir," he solemnly replied, "come just as you are, and don't delay."

There was nothing for it evidently but to go, albeit, an officer in bathing drawers did not lend dignity to the proceedings, but no time must be lost, and decorum was out of the question when life and death are the issue. So Captain Alexander wended his way through the house, giving a passing word of explanation of the urgency to his wife, who sat in her room in a state of nervous anxiety more easily imagined than described.

Outside in the yard he was confronted

by half a dozen young men of about two years' service, dressed in semi-uniform and drawn up in a line with their muskets loaded and capped.

It was an exciting moment, and the occasion needed nerve and decision.

"Well, what do you want to see me for?"

The reply came cool and insolent,—

"Money for our journey to Cawnpore and Delhi."

"I am afraid I cannot help you. How much do you want?"

"Two hundred rupees. Shall we take it from the treasury?"

"I have no authority to issue such an order."

"Then," they answered, "*you* must provide the sum."

"I was paid in your presence at the same time that you were paid, and you know I cannot give you two hundred rupees, and if I give you what I have, what am I to live upon?"

"You must give us what you have,'

was the impudent rejoinder, and as there seemed no alternative, Captain Alexander went indoors to get the money. Some of the rebels followed to prevent escape and to see they were not cheated. But Mrs. Alexander kept back fifty rupees, the rest of their resources being brought out for delivery to the men.

An altercation then ensued, some were for giving back a part of the money, showing the esteem in which Captain and Mrs. Alexander were held, a fact which suggests what would have occurred had they been held in disregard.

But even now the bad counsellors prevailed, the money was taken and the men sullenly passed out of the fort. Once outside, the gates were quickly closed behind them, but only just in time, for they returned and banged for some time with their muskets. However, they soon tired of this exercise and took their departure.

In the evening, our friends, standing on the ramparts, saw the bridge of boats in a blaze. The rebels, after they had crossed

to the Cawnpore side, set the bridge alight and destroyed the only means of crossing from or to Calpee.

It is very unlikely that an officer arrayed in a complete bathing costume, and supported by an orderly, ever before succeeded in thwarting rebellious murderers and effectually ensconcing himself in a fortress.

But it was impossible that he could hold out here for any length of time, as the loose characters of the city were in a ferment, and, like the lawless everywhere, looking out for opportunities to wreck and ravage. The question, however, was, where to go, and what to do.

CHAPTER V.

DEPARTURE FROM CALPEE.

Captain Brown, the Deputy Commissioner, not deeming it safe to remain any longer at Ooraie, made over the charge of the district to a native chief, and set out, hoping to find refuge at Gwalior. At the same time he sent a mounted man to Captain Alexander, at Calpee, to inform him of his plans, and request him to join him if possible.

This was no easy matter, for on leaving the fort and passing through the town they were at once surrounded by a crowd of blackguards who menaced them with sticks and swords. The brave orderly met them with his bayonet fixed, and the mounted servant from Ooraie rode in amongst them shouting at the top of his voice, "If any

harm comes to this lady and gentleman the Rajah has sworn to come and burn down the town." This bold front was fortunately successful, but had there been a daring leader amongst the rabble, it is pretty certain that this story would never have been told.

However, all difficulties were safely surmounted and Captain Alexander took leave of his servants and orderly, and as evening closed down, they were fairly on the journey. It was a strange experience to be forcing a march back over the very ground that had been placed between them and Ooraie only a few days before, and, with the remembrance of that terrible ride still fresh, they pushed on all through the night, and in the morning arrived at their destination. But it was no place of safety.

Captain Brown had left, and our friends incurred increasing risk every moment they remained, for there was no knowing how soon the Jhansi butchers would reach the place on their march to Delhi, and to fall

into their hands was certain death and nameless horror. So procuring a couple of native litters, it being impossible to obtain horses, an early departure was made.

If the buggy had previously been uncomfortable, the litters were simply excruciating. No doubt it is easy for native women to ride crouching, half sitting, half lying, but then they are brought up to it, while Mrs. Alexander had no experience in such a position. Cramped and tired, the first halting-place was reached—twelve miles on the road. Here a kind and friendly welcome was extended to them by Tuhseeldar Inayut Hoosain Khan, a native collector and police officer of some education. He placed a room at their disposal, and took every care of his weary charges; then, after a refreshing rest, he provided a proper litter for Mrs. Alexander and a horse for her husband.

Thus accommodated, and with an escort of policemen, Captain Brown's party was easily overtaken by the following morning,

he having been joined by Captain Lamb, of the artillery.

For his kind services the police officer was afterwards rewarded by the Government, who promoted him to an important position, which he has held with a dignity that has commanded respect from all about him.

Gwalior was considered to be quite a safe resort, as it belonged to a powerful independent prince. His well-trained troops were commanded by British officers, and altogether the fugitives thought nothing better could be desired as a place of safety.

Passing through the prince's territory, Captain Brown sent word to the headman of a large village to learn if there was any news from Gwalior.

"No news, quite safe," was the welcome reply. So the little band of three horsemen, together with Mrs. Alexander's litter, pressed on. However, in the darkness of the night that soon came on, they heard behind them the sound of galloping horse-

men. What could it be? Some new danger? The anxious party left the roadway to await events. On came the troop, while hearts beat high with excitement and hands clutched weapons ready to sell life dearly. The horsemen galloped on, and, as far as could be seen, appeared to be going to pass by, a hope that was soon dashed to the ground, for they drew up right opposite the hiding group. They certainly did not expect what occurred, for without any pause or introduction one of the men said in a rude, loud voice, "I have been sent by the head-man to tell you that the Gwalior troops have mutinied, officers and ladies and children are all killed, and you can go on there or not, just as you like."

This news was most certainly a warning from God, but having delivered it in a most ungracious manner, the men turned round and rode back the way they had come.

By what Providence had these treacherous men been compelled to take all this

trouble to avert a fate that but a short time previously they had evidently conspired to bring about? It was learnt afterwards that the whole village where they had inquired as to Gwalior was well aware of the outbreak there, and the head-man actually was seen by one of Captain Brown's servants in the centre of a crowd near his quarters, glorying in his perfidy and boasting of his successful lie which was sending our friends to the death-trap at Gwalior.

This faithful servant of Captain Brown at once spoke up, saying, "You should have warned the gentlemen, and not allowed them to go on." A bravery that might have cost him his life. But on a refusal to send word to the doomed travellers, the servant appealed to his shame and fear by saying, "I will go and tell myself." Evidently the head-man was only a "fair-weather" rebel, and, fearing the consequences of his treachery, sent the message in the manner described, which necessitated another consultation at mid-

night on the open road, at which it was decided to proceed to Etawah, a station in British territory about twelve or fourteen miles away.

CHAPTER VI.

TO ETAWAH.

At the very commencement of the new plan, new difficulties arose, for the men who were carrying Mrs. Alexander's litter, on hearing that they were to retrace their steps, set down their burden and bolted, leaving the travellers in a most serious dilemma.

However, it was no time for ceremony, and the only resort was for the lady to ride on a baggage camel, covered with a sheet to make her look like a native woman. She rode between two boxes on the camel all the rest of that night and part of the following morning. The see-saw, see-saw motion of the camel did not contribute to the comfort of the position, and in crossing a small stream in the early morning, the

rebellion appeared to reach the animal, for in mid-stream he was seized with a determination to lie down, regardless of the lady and the baggage. However, by dint of many blows and much shouting, to the general relief he was at last safe across.

They had now reached the Jumna, and Etawah lay on the opposite bank of the river. The garrison consisted of half a native regiment with English officers, there being in addition some civilians and their clerks, and a few employees on the railway, besides the officers' wives.

Inquiries were made as to the state of things at this place, and once more disappointment at not finding a safe retreat was mingled with gratitude to God, for warning the travellers of what had taken place, before they fell into the hands of the enemy. Had they been two days later they would have been completely cut off.

Only the day before the native regiment had mutinied, though the residents had left the place without any of them being killed, and were about twenty miles

on the road to Agra. An endeavour was made to obtain some food, and a hurried consultation was held, before starting to join the fugitives ahead. Late in the evening our party came upon them at Ferozeabad, a large town with a strong fort, and they were as glad to see the addition to their numbers as Captain Alexander and his wife were to overtake them, and a hearty greeting gave the first taste of security that had been enjoyed for a very long time, although danger and trouble were not over, there being yet about thirty miles of journeying before Agra could be reached.

CHAPTER VII.

TO AGRA.

THE men now made a pretty large company and rode in military order. The party consisted of over twenty armed Europeans, besides ladies and children who rode in carriages drawn by bullocks, and Mrs. Alexander was very glad to share, through the kindness of a lady, one of these carriages, the comfort being most welcome after her previous rough experience.

They arrived without further adventure at Fyzabad, a big town, where there was a large number of loose characters—Mahommedans; and as our friends were evidently not welcome, the incivility met with determined them to stay no longer than was necessary to obtain food. The efforts in this direction resulted in the purchasing

of some grain to eat, and some native sweets, which were dissolved in water and drunk. This was not quite nectar, but near enough to cause gratitude under the circumstances.

Resuming their journey as soon as possible, the weary, anxious march was continued till about eleven o'clock the next day, when the company rested and refreshed themselves. This was about twelve miles from Agra, but there was no information as to whether the mutiny had broken out there. If the troops were still in the cantonments, all was well, but if they had moved into the fort, then it was a hopeless outlook.

While they rested in the shade, musing on their fate, the boom of the mid-day gun came floating across from Agra.

One simultaneous exclamation escaped the whole party, "Agra is safe!"

How they laughed and cried and congratulated each other, and thanked God for that message of hope.

"Safe!" What a meaning was conveyed in that word.

Under the blazing sun they started again at once with light hearts, heedless of exposure that on ordinary occasions must have smitten many down. For over two hours they pressed on, passing through the grounds of the "Taj Mehal," where the keeper confirmed the hopes raised by the signal gun, and at two o'clock they reached the cantonments. Separating from the rest of the party, Captain and Mrs. Alexander put up at the house of a friend, Lieutenant Thomson, Adjutant of the 3rd European Regiment (now the 109th), thankful indeed for a harbour of refuge at last, even though all around consternation and excitement prevailed.

The native troops had fortunately been disarmed in time, and were meditating an escape, that was later on successfully accomplished, while the fort was strengthened and preparation made for a siege, it already having been rumoured that two native regiments and a battery of native artillery which had mutinied at Nuseerabad and Mhow, were not far off, and were bear-

ing down upon the city. So that it was only two days after the arrival at Agra that all were ordered into the fort. Besides our friends there were the few who escaped the Gwalior massacre. They came into Agra about the same time, objects most pitiable to behold, having undergone great hardships and hair-breadth escapes. Among them was a little girl whom Mrs. Alexander took charge of, and who had witnessed the murder of her father, Captain W. Stewart, of the Artillery, and also her mother and baby brother, a fate she herself escaped through the fidelity of one of her father's servants. She remained with the Alexanders till after the fall of Delhi, when they took her to Meerut and gave her into the charge of her uncle, Captain J. S. Frith, of the Artillery, an old schoolfellow of Captain Alexander. This little girl (now Lady Ramsey) is still alive, and no doubt retains a vivid recollection of these sad events.

Two days later, tidings came of the approach of rebels from Nuseerabad.

The troops were at once turned out and marched off to meet the enemy, while to assist the Artillery a small body of Cavalry Volunteers was organized from the civilians, clerks, and fugitives, among the latter being Captain Alexander's friend and fellow traveller, Captain Lamb. Captain Alexander was ordered into the fort to assist the Commissariat officer, Captain H. Chalmers, whither also the women, children, and all non-combatants were sent for safety. The servants, as usual, had bolted, and the shepherds, bullock drivers, etc., had disappeared. This was very awkward, for the sheep were all left outside the gates, and it was absolutely essential in view of a possible siege that they should be inside. Captain Alexander was obliged, therefore, to go out himself and devote his attention to the unusual pursuit of drover. He was soon driving the animals up towards the drawbridge as if accustomed to the work from his youth, but alas for human resource, the constitution of sheep strictly forbade them crossing

the bridge. He drove, he coaxed, he shouted, but they were blind, deaf, and insensible to such arguments.

However, they had to be got in somehow, so taking one by the leg, Captain Alexander dragged him bodily backward over the bridge. It was a tough struggle, but a merry one, and apparently a lesson to the rest of the sheep, for they all hurried over as if each feared his turn might be next. Whatever it was, they were safely brought in.

An anxious day was passed, for underneath the walls of the fort there was a continuous tumult throughout the city, while quite near by was heard "the sound of them that strive for the mastery," the boom of cannon, the crack of rifles.

At last evening approached, and with it the Englishmen were defeated! Poor fellows, they were worn out with the long day's work, dropping from exposure to the broiling sun. Not a drop of water had been obtainable, for at the first shot the water

carriers and the hospital litter carriers had bolted.

Worse still, perhaps, the Artillery had expended their ammunition, and were opposed to a battery of Native Horse Artillery considered to be the smartest in the service, who pounded and knocked over gunners, horses, and limbers, so that a retreat was ordered.

A large number were killed and wounded, beside many of the Volunteer Cavalry, amongst them poor Captain Lamb, who received a mortal wound, and died in the hospital about a week later.

The retreat was well ordered, and not hurried, still it had a bad effect. Fortunately the rebels did not follow up their advantage, preferring the old game of plunder and riot; and though there was safety inside the fort, the state of the city was certainly enough to shake the strongest nerves.

Thousands of the greatest scoundrels in the country gave themselves up to their own devices. What a picture of horror is

the unrestrained riot of fallen humanity! Torches gleamed and cast their flickering lights over the swart faces of the howling crowds, their sabres flashed and shone as they darted hither and thither in search of aught that might meet their fancy. Burning here, plundering there, pandemonium was outdone.

But no one could lie down without some effort to stop the rabble. So the besieged (as such our friends now were) lent their quota to the *mêlée* in the shape of a few shells from the twelve-pound howitzers.

Bang went the glowing balls down the streets, leaving a line of light in their course and bursting amid the shrieks of the rebels. They evidently were not agreeable to this kind of treatment, for the streets were soon cleared and quiet, and it was afterwards learned that the mutineers had continued their march to swell the ranks at Delhi, where the aged rebel king held his court.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT AGRA—QUIETING DOWN.

ALTHOUGH the actual confinement in the fort was only about twenty days or a month, yet Captain Alexander with his wife remained there till October. The country began to quiet down after the Nuseerabad mutineers had passed, leaving a feeling of growing hope ; for the provision merchants, cloth merchants, and traders of all sorts brought their goods and displayed them outside the fort, and people ventured forth and made many purchases, thus relieving the Commissariat Department, which had felt the strain of the confinement. Captain Alexander's duty had been to assist in issuing the daily rations—no mean task, for all had to be weighed out ;

then in the evening he walked back to his quarters with the shares for himself and those quartered with him.

Picture a gallant captain carrying the raw meat tied up in a handkerchief, and then the ladies cooking it. But what cause for gratitude they had for their safety, when afterwards they learned the fate of their dear ones, and many, many of the flower of their countrymen, and women who were dishonoured and hacked to pieces.

However, it was a new experience fetching water from the wells and doing the household work in an unventilated gun shed, under the wall of the fort, inside of which our friends were quartered by day, and outside of which they slept by night, exposed to the oppressive heat, that with privation began to tell upon their health; and yet, though sickness increased, there was, thank God, no cholera in epidemic form.

Soon some tents were pitched in the very extensive open space inside the fort, and the 104th were moved into camp;

the Adjutant and his wife, who had already sheltered them on their first arrival at Agra, kindly offering Captain and Mrs. Alexander a part of their tent, in which they made themselves very comfortable till quarters for all officers were erected. These were mere frame-works of wood, filled in with matting for walls, and thatched roofs; but a couple of rooms and some servants went far to restore comfort and contentment.

These luxuries, however, could not dispel the uneasy feelings caused by continued uncertainty as to the fate of their loved ones.

For three months our poor friends were fed by rumour and report. To-day Cawnpore and Lucknow had fallen, to-morrow it was contradicted. Then news of the massacres would take definite shape, only to be followed by denials.

On paper, readers can enter into the spirit of a sharp, short struggle, but who can tell the fearful agony of suspense—wearying, remorseless suspense? Captain

Alexander and his fellow fugitives know a phase of the mutiny that yet requires its historian, and only those who endured, not merely the privations and hair-breadth escapes, but the terrible nerve-destroying, soul-piercing suspense, can ever portray what happened to them and many another band of harassed people, who have borne, or will bear to their graves, the cold sweat of that dreadful persecution of suspense.

They longed for, yet dreaded, every day to receive news of friends. Besides Mrs. Alexander's mother and sisters at Cawnpore, there were at the same station an aunt with her husband and two children, Dr. and Mrs. Newnham. At Lucknow they had an uncle, Colonel Master, C.B. Mrs. Alexander's two brothers were on the Bombay side. Captain Alexander's eldest sister and her husband, Captain and Mrs. Elliot, with their children, were in a disaffected part of the country, while their grandparents, General and Mrs. Kennedy, were at Benares, and were so aged that even a shock might kill them. And finally,

Captain Alexander's own and only brother (whose death has already been described) was at Allahabad.

Delhi fell in September, 1857, and after the dispersion of the rebels a column came to the relief of Agra.

Their appearance was the sign for general rejoicing. These heroes were greeted with the greatest enthusiasm, for they had borne the brunt of battle and the heat of day. They marched past the fort and encamped in the plain where the cantonment once stood.

The men pitched their tents and were preparing for breakfast as if they were out on a holiday expedition. Some stood round their camp-fires stripped to the waist. Some were carrying water; others arranging their baggage. Altogether composing a scene of the liveliest interest, amid laughter and joking, and all the ups and downs and ins and outs of camp life.

While this was at its height, to the consternation of everybody, round shot fired

at short range came tearing into the camp.

A more complete surprise could not have been accomplished. There was not even time to wonder where the balls came from, but it was soon learned that the Gwalior mutineers had come up so quietly and so quickly that, with the aid of the standing crops which gave them shelter, they had actually come quite close without a suspicion of their approach.

Many from the fort had, at early morning, been out riding and driving over the very parts where they now lay concealed, and their safety can only be accounted for on the supposition that the rebels desired to remain undiscovered till they could spring upon the approaching Delhi troops and by a sudden decisive blow annihilate them. But they reckoned without their host.

True, the Gwalior men were four to one, with a large number of guns, some very heavy, for pounding the Agra fort to pieces. But the column from Delhi, under Brigadier Greathead, of the 8th Foot, were

not exactly children, and not at all dismayed by the unexpected upset of their breakfast arrangements. They fell under arms at once and led a most determined attack.

In a shorter time than one would think possible the enemy were in full retreat, leaving all their guns in their haste to get away. They were followed for miles with tremendous slaughter, which quite cleared the neighbourhood of rebels.

CHAPTER IX.

ALEXANDER'S HORSE.

About the end of October Captain Alexander was directed to raise some mounted men for duty in the Agra district, and as the work increased their numbers increased, till with Hindoos, Mohammedans, and Sikhs they were five hundred strong, and known as "Alexander's Horse."

They joined Sir Colin Campbell's force at Futtegurh, and remained several days, but Etawah being threatened, they were ordered off there post-haste, but only to be detained at Mynpoorie, where their strength held the place in check.

However, news soon came that a post on the Cawnpore road was threatened, and Captain Alexander immediately set out

for its defence; a detachment of European Infantry, leaving Futtegurh by bullock train at the same time, were to join them en route.

Mrs. Alexander went to Agra, as her husband was to set out on this expedition at eleven a.m.; the distance, sixty miles, being covered by sunrise the following morning, they having marched right across with only one hour, at ten o'clock at night, for rest and food.

Having accomplished this feat, the civil officer who had sent for assistance calmly informed Captain Alexander that the fort was secure and he did not want any help.

Twenty-four hours for rest, and another civil officer (now celebrated equally as a theosophist and magistrate), Mr. A. O. Hume, C.B., became alarmed, and Captain Alexander with his men were ordered to support him at Etawah, where they arrived the second day and were ordered to—halt!

However, there were rumours rife in this district, and positive information was

received of the presence of some rebels at a large village twenty-five miles away, so Captain Alexander wrote to the General Officer in command, Sir T. Seaton, and requested instructions.

No reply came, and after a consultation by the officers of the regiment, and unknown to the Civil Officer, it was decided to ride over with twenty-five men and reconnoitre the enemy's position.

A start was made at four a.m., but before arriving at their destination Captain Alexander was joined by Mr. Hume himself, who expressed annoyance at having been kept in the dark as to the expedition's movements. As explanations were forthcoming, the forces united. The fact was, that the country being under martial law, it was unnecessary for Captain Alexander to have conferred with Mr. Hume.

Mr. Hume's retainers consisted of a large number of villagers armed with matchlocks and an old popgun. An inspection of the men emboldened Captain Alexander. He resolved to turn a recon-

naisance into an attack when the enemy's position should be discovered.

The day was well advanced when the force finished the long march of twenty-five miles and they found the rebels strongly posted in a tope (grove) of trees with a mud wall all round. So that the enemy had the best of the position.

However, the old gun was got into play, and a steady fire from the villagers' match-locks was commenced. Captain Alexander then took his men to their enemies' right flank, but out of range and a little to their rear. Their response to the match-lock men was issued from an old gun they had possessed themselves of, but seeing from this flank movement the possibility of their being cut off, they broke from their entrenchment, and Captain Alexander led the charge directly they got outside.

The chaff flies before the wind, indeed, but only with measured flight compared to the scattering of the fearful foe—fearful, we mean, of consequences.

Our friends were in a poor condition

to follow, having had no rest or food since they started before daybreak, but they did their best and pursued as far as the poor done-up horses would allow.

For himself, Captain Alexander was galloping about 250 yards behind a man who, from his dress, was evidently of some consequence. But force his jaded horse as he would, he made no appreciable diminution in the distance between him and his retreating foe.

Seeing this, the horsemen stopped his horse and turned round, at the same time levelling a large double-barrelled gun, taking deliberate aim, while Captain Alexander rode on straight into his fire. The first shot went through the right whisker of the Captain. Then he took aim again, but the bullet falling wide of its mark, he turned and carried away his empty weapon at a furious gallop till he was out of reach altogether.

The rebels' gun was captured, and also a number of matchlocks, swords, etc., most of them having flung away their arms

in their flight. A rest was ordered, the tired horses attended to, and then the victorious force steadily wended their way to camp, where they arrived at 7 p.m., having done a very fair day's work in travelling about sixty miles and completely routing the marauding band of rebels.

Their entry into the village was a triumphal march. The head native officer of the regiment with his long white beard came forward to receive the conquering hero, and with his hand full of money made a kind of magic circle round Captain Alexander's head, saying, "I congratulate you on your victory."

The next day a reply arrived from Sir T. Seaton, directing that "on no account was the offensive to be taken with so small a force."

But it was too late. The deed was done and complete victory justified the action, while the most satisfactory results followed, for the district was quite cleared of rebels, who did not venture into it again.

For this service Captain Alexander received neither reward nor thanks from the Government, but the *Times* correspondent, Dr. H. Russell, immortalized him by writing an appreciative description of the engagement for his paper.

. . . . .

Another incident in connection with "Alexander's Horse" occurred when they were ordered to Muttra from Agra, to assist the civil officer in restoring confidence to the people and quieting the district.

Starting out from the cantonment one evening (Mrs. Alexander accompanying her husband), camp was pitched after a fairly long march. Supper of milk and unleavened bread was partaken of preparatory to seeking such rest as might be obtained on the ground, under shelter of a small tent.

Sentries and pickets were out and a peaceful time seemed promised, when the "first sweet sleep of night" was broken by a great disturbance in the camp. A messenger

arrived from the Civil Officer stating that he had received information of the approach of a party of rebels, and Captain Alexander was warned of an impending attack.

A return journey to Muttra was commenced at midnight and continued until day was well advanced, but no sign of the rebels was discovered except some of their camels, which they left behind them, just by way, perhaps, of proving what they might have done. These camels Captain Alexander purchased, and they turned out a most profitable investment, for after carrying his baggage till the end of 1859, he sold them again for more than double what he had paid for them.

This kind of incident went far to relieve the great monotony of the stay in the Fort of Agra, while the enlistment of "Alexander's Horse" was continued. It was otherwise a really dreary imprisonment, for there was no book, not even a Bible to be had, everything having been lost when escaping from Ooraie.

Mrs. Alexander found employment in

caring for the little girl rescued from Gwalior, while her husband had some occasional clerical work in assisting Mr. (afterward Sir William) Muir, who was then secretary to the Governor of the North-West Province, whose headquarters were at Agra.

However, when amid the fearful heat, cholera and sickness became prevalent, the Lieutenant-Governor, though spared from the mutineers, fell a victim to disease, and died, being buried in the fort; an event that caused much depression and sadness.

Cut off as the fugutives were from all the great cities, despatches had to be very short, as there was great difficulty in getting them delivered. The bearers of them being paid very high remuneration, as the finding of a letter on their persons meant certain death to them.

It was not less difficult to obtain horses than men for the new regiment, and the purchase of these was not always free from the urgent demands of "red tape," as in the following case.

Captain Alexander secured ten or a dozen horses from the prize agent, paying him in cash, and receiving the agent's receipts, written on two slips of paper, stationery being at a heavy premium. In 1863, nearly seven years after, being then at Bareilly, the bill for the horses was sent to Captain Alexander by the Accountant's Department, they having no vouchers to cover the transaction. His assurance that he had paid in cash at the time of the purchase was deemed insufficient, as well as his statement that all the books and documents of the regiment were lodged with the station staff officer at Nagode, Bundelcund. The agent of whom the purchase was made, affirmed that as he had no record of payment, the sum could not have been received by him. However, in 1864, when appointed second in command of the 1st Bengal Cavalry, Major Alexander was ordered to Nagode, and after a laborious search among the almost forgotten papers, he found the two slips bearing the prize agent's receipt for all the

horses purchased. They were worth about £120 to their owner, besides clearing his character from a nasty stigma. They were forwarded to the Accountant's Department from which not a word of regret or reply has ever been received to this day.

It was nothing less than marvellous how the two slips of paper escaped, after eight years' knocking about unfiled, and simply rolled up along with other "unconsidered trifles."

Early in 1859, "Alexander's Horse" were ordered from Mynpoorie and Etawah to Cawnpore, and thence to Bundelcund, where the district was much disturbed.

Captain Alexander's wife and a young lady friend accompanied him to Cawnpore. The thought of going there was a sad grief to Mrs. Alexander, but when they arrived and found their camp pitched on the very plain where General Havelock had fought and driven back the mutineers in 1857, and close to General Wheeler's fatal entrenchment, the poor lady quite broke down and could scarcely be comforted.

The large house where the unfortunate women and children were first taken after the Nana's treacherous attack on General Wheeler's little force was also close by, and revived all the scenes (details of which were then known) that had so recently been enacted on the spot, and one of the saddest of Captain Alexander's experiences was to see the face that had once been so bright and joyous gradually cloud with sorrow, which has never altogether left it.

It was with much relief, then, that the next day orders were received to remove to other quarters on the banks of the Ganges, and some distance from the fearful plain of death and woe.

Captain Alexander occupied what before the mutiny had been a fine house, but was now a ruin, and though all was done to ensure comfort, Mrs. Alexander would never venture out of the grounds, nor could she bear the thought of visiting any place that might open afresh the wounds only slightly healed. She soon after went to Benares to her friends, while Captain

Alexander went with his regiment to Bundelcund.

A few days after arriving there the general officer commanding the troops paid a visit to the camp. The officers invited him to lunch. Captain Alexander apologized for the poorness of the fare, stating that their only supplies were claret and tinned provisions. He replied,—

"Well, I don't think any apology necessary when I find you young fellows roughing it on truffles and claret!"

Nothing of any note occurred till about a week afterwards when encamped on the banks of a river guarding the ford, where it was supposed the rebels would make a dash and try to escape.

One night the pickets and sentries had been placed and every precaution taken to prevent a surprise.

Suddenly a great hubbub was heard. A man came galloping in from the picket to say that the enemy was at hand. The regiment was promptly turned out, and in ten minutes every man was mounted and

ready for action. Another man rode up to say that the rebels were fast approaching, and the force was moved out into the open. A third messenger rode up.

"Well, what tidings?"

The reply was that the picket had challenged the approaching enemy, to find that they were harmless camels.

This false alarm tested the readiness of our men, and helped to keep them in good humour amid danger and suffering.

CHAPTER X.

THE 1ST BENGAL CAVALRY.

In 1867, Major Alexander, whose fortunes we have briefly traced through many stirring scenes, was appointed commandant of the famous Bengal Cavalry regiment, originally known as "Skinner's Horse."

The history of this famous regiment has been compiled from the regimental records supplied by General Alexander, and published with the approval of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, the late Lord Napier of Magdala, G.C.B. The following condensed extract from the story is intensely interesting.

James Skinner was the son of a Scotch father and a Hindoo mother.

He served with great distinction under the Mahrattas. He was discharged when

Scindhia fell out with the English, but still yearned for the colours and comrades with which he had shared danger and victory.

After the defeat of Perron by Lord Lake, at Allyghur, Skinner was appointed to the command of the Yellow-Coated Horse, which has become identified with his name.

The first action under the British colours, characterized by his earlier reckless daring, was the key-note to his ensuing career.

In the Meerut district, about eight *coss* (sixteen miles) from Secundra, was the fort of Malaghur, held by Madharao the Mahratta, and from him Skinner received an order to quit the district.

Skinner's reply provoked the chief to fight, and about a mile from Secundra the forces met.

Twice was Skinner repulsed in his attack; but the third time, turning to his men with scorn and anger in his appeal, he stung them into fury, and more like demons than men, the small band of the Yellow

Troop dashed upon the strong position of the Mahratta chief, captured the guns, and cut down almost every man of the infantry.

The cavalry escaped to Malaghur, and within the fort were safe, until Skinner, learning that fodder was scarce for the many horses crowded within the defences, offered a reward to any man who would destroy the supply.

A man volunteered, and started on his perilous errand.

For two days nothing was heard of him, and it was feared he had perished, when one night he presented himself to Skinner.

"I have earned," he said, "the reward; a slow match is now burning beneath each stack;" and the words had hardly gone the round of the camp before the night sky was lit up by the flames of Malaghur.

The fort surrendered at once, Madharao was sent to Delhi, six hundred of his *sowars* (mounted troopers) entered British service, and Captain Skinner was placed in general command of the country between Allyghur and Delhi, with a roving commission to

secure tranquillity. And hardly at any time in the history of our wars in India has the utility of irregular cavalry, its dash and determination, been so illustrated as when Skinner held the country between Allyghur and Delhi.

Brilliant above all his exploits was the sudden swoop upon the Sikhs at Saharunpore, when, with eight hundred horse, Skinner cut up five thousand men, and brought back with him all the confederate chiefs who had assembled on the Jumna.

For six months this restless soldier was occupied in fighting round Saharunpore, with unvarying success.

At the Pass of Laswarree the first Mahratta War had virtually ended, and Scindhia appeared no more as the chief opponent of the British. But the ruins of his misfortunes became the foundations of Holkar's renown, and against him turned the tide of war.

General Monson was retiring in disgrace before Holkar, and Captain Skinner was ordered to raise his corps to twelve hundred

horse, and to join the detachment proceeding to his support.

But Holkar's fame was terrible, and Skinner's newly recruited troopers began to desert.

Opposite Muttra the panic reached its climax; and from it resulted one of those picturesque episodes which can hardly be looked for, save in the history of some such corps as Skinner's Horse.

With the troops at this time was Lieutenant Robert Skinner, formerly in the service of the Begum Sombre, and in command of six *ressalahs* (squadrons). This officer had crossed the river.

Captain Skinner was on the other side with the remainder of the force, when three ressalahs, who had been ordered to cross, saddled their horses and galloped in the direction of the ford; but there, thinking themselves out of sight, turned off when they had passed it, and rode towards Koonjah.

Skinner was dumfounded, and before he had made up his mind what to do in the

emergency, he heard his *khas* (special) ressalah saddling their horses without orders! The moment was one of intensest anxiety; but it was soon over, for with shouts his favourite troop came riding up, calling out to be led against the deserters who were disgracing the corps.

Skinner, leaping upon his horse, made the ressalahs swear upon the Koran that they would follow where he led, and within the hour they had overtaken the runaways. But not even their defiant attitude could persuade Skinner that his men were earnest in their desertion; so advancing alone, he addressed them in the kindest language. But they would not return, and his anger rising, Skinner called them the cowards they were. Upon this several guns were fired at him, and Skinner fell.

The khas ressalah were looking on, and when they saw their leader fall they sent up a cry that rang along the country till the troops beyond the river heard it, and with

the fury of tigers they swept down upon the mutineers. Hardly a third of the runaways escaped to the fort of the Hattras Rajah to tell of the revenge of Skinner's Horse.

Meanwhile Skinner himself was unhurt, for the fire of the renegades had only killed his horse, and next morning, with the remnant of his force, he joined the detachment.

Lord Lake soon after arrived in camp and inspected the corps of which he had heard so much; spoke in high terms of their gallantry on the field, increased the pay of the sowars, and directed four galloper guns to be permanently attached to the corps.

Nevertheless, this desertion of his "Yellow Boys" was felt with keen bitterness by their gallant leader, who himself thus defended his Horse:—

"After the affair I crossed the river, and during the interval vast numbers of soldiers, European officers and camp followers, belonging to the disastrous detachment of the Honourable General Monson, came in

daily, stripped almost naked, many without their noses and hands, and in other respects in a miserable condition. The alarm occasioned in the detachment by the sight of these wretched men was very great, and I do not wish to describe it. Nevertheless my corps continued to perform all the camp duties with alacrity, and as good soldiers should. The day before, the detachment I was with commenced its retreat to Agra, fifty of my sowars, who were placed with the regulars at one of the pickets, deserted, and in this instance it would be necessary for the Bengal Cavalry to ascertain if my men alone went off, or if the regulars accompanied them. I had no intimation given me of the sudden resolution adopted by them. They commenced their march about seven o'clock in the evening, leaving me encamped as I was. A few hours afterwards, finding myself alone, I struck my camp and followed their route. I found many of their tents standing and most of their baggage still lying on the

ground. I kept in the rear with the little I had, and about daybreak brought it up safe to Furrah, which was half way to Agra, without meeting with a single man of the enemy. I reported my arrival to the Commander-in-Chief, who thanked me for my exertions, and directed me to keep in the rear till the troops marched, when the line halted for an hour or two. I then sat down with the officers of the 8th Native Infantry, many of whom are now alive ; and I call upon them, as well as the different commandants of the infantry battalions, especially Colonel Burrell, who, I believe, was in the rear of the line, as was Captain Welsh, now living; I would appeal to him, as he remained with my corps from Furrah to Gao Ghât, a distance of about six *coss*, to witness the steady attachment shown by my men upon this most trying occasion. . . . To the best of my recollection, about this period a thousand Hindustanee horse were entertained at or near Delhi, and placed under the command of British officers on the

approach of Holkar's brigade towards Delhi. The whole of these Hindustanees, with the exception of one ressalah, went over to the enemy, and my corps was the only one left in the service."

And even had they deserted, the disgrace would have been one shared by all the force, for the retreat of the British army upon Agra was more disgraceful than Monson's. Desertion was the order of the day; not only individuals, but companies, whole wings went off daily. The reports of Holkar's approach in overwhelming force caused a perfect panic, and, says Skinner, "The greatest confusion I ever witnessed prevailed. The best of the business was, that Holkar was running off one way, while we were running from him in another. The officers lost all their property; and such was our fright and confusion, that I do not believe any regiment could number twenty men under their colours. Had the detachment met a thousand resolute men of the enemy, we should have made a worse business of it

than Monson's. We pushed on to Agra, where we took shelter under the fort; and so greatly was the character of the British troops degraded in the native eyes by our behaviour, that the very thieves pelted us all night with stones."

CHAPTER XI.

DEFEAT OF HOLKAR.

For some time the army remained *in situ*. But suddenly Lord Lake heard from the Resident at Delhi that Holkar, with a vast force, was before that place, and gave the orders for an advance on the threatened spot.

But the army was powerless to move!

A great convoy, which was bringing the supplies for the march, had been detained by the Hattras Rajah, and Skinner was at once deputed to rescue the convoy.

Leaving his brother to follow with the remainder, Captain Skinner dashed on with four hundred sowars, and reached Hattras in time to find the *brinjara* (carriers) unloading their cattle.

Whip in hand, Skinner and a few of his horse rode among the men of commerce,

and compelled them to reload ; and in a few hours the immense convoy of sixty thousand bullocks was in motion towards Lord Lake's camp.

At this moment the Rajah of Hattras was seen to issue from the fort, and from the other side, a *deus ex machinâ*, appeared Robert Skinner with the remainder of the corps.

Seeing the reinforcement, the Rajah deemed it prudent, after firing a few shots, to hold a parley, which resulted in the Rajah retiring, in spite of the splendid loot the convoy offered.

Captain Skinner conveyed his charge safely to Lord Lake's camp, and was presented by the Commander-in-Chief with his own sword, while Rs. 20,000 were distributed among the sowars.

The convoy had brought a seven days' supply of grain for the whole army, so Lord Lake at once marched on Delhi. Holkar thereupon retired, halting in the territory of the Begum Sombre, to persuade her to join him against the British.

Information of this was, however, carried to Lord Lake, who at once ordered Captain Skinner to advance, and ascertain its truth.

The "Yellow Boys" had not gone far before they came upon an advanced guard of cavalry, which, after a severe engagement and great loss, Skinner repelled.

The victory was hardly gained, however, before the main army of Holkar was discovered approaching, and the distinguished corps would certainly have ceased to exist, had it not happened that Lord Lake, anxious as to the fate of his gallant cavalry, had followed them up.

The armies were in sight of each other, but there was yet time to recognize, as it deserved, the gallantry of Skinner's Horse; and, halting the whole army, Lord Lake drew from his holsters a pair of pistols, with which, on the site of his very gallant exploit, he presented Captain Skinner, the British infantry applauding the graceful compliment paid to pluck, by sending up a cheer that so alarmed Holkar, that

in an hour he was in full retreat to Futteghur.

Lord Lake started in pursuit, came up with the force, and inflicted severe loss.

Deeming it rash to pursue further, Lord Lake halted, sending Captain Skinner in advance to follow Holkar and watch his movements.

Acting upon orders, with their usual energy, the Yellow Troop appeared before Mynpoorie just as that place was about to surrender to Holkar, who retired precipitately on Skinner's appearance.

In this way, coming up with him at every halt, Skinner drove Holkar from Futteghur to Mynpoorie, from Mynpoorie to Etawah, from thence to Mahabun, through the Doab and across the Jumna at Muttra. He then turned to headquarters.

During this brilliant pursuit the daily marches averaged thirty-one miles, the horses were seldom unsaddled, and the men slept every night under arms, sub-

sisting during the day upon the green crops standing in the fields.

Recognizing, as it deserved, this splendid exploit, Lord Lake gave Captain Skinner a fine horse with silver trappings, and dismissed him, with permission to halt at Coel (Allyghur) to rest his exhausted corps, at the same time authorizing him to raise its strength to seventeen hundred horse.

Before dismissing them, Lord Lake inspected the troop, and complimented them before all the forces upon their unvarying gallantry, adding the memorable words: "By your services you have established a claim for life on the British Government, which shall never be forgotten, *and your bread is made permanent*."

The rest at Coel was, however, a very short one, for Skinner's Horse could not be spared, and in the action of Allygunge this corps sustained its reputation. Meanwhile the grand army was before Bhurtpore, and the Yellow Troop was sent for, to keep communications open and to

guard the grain convoys—on one of these occasions distinguishing itself signally. A brinjara laden with grain was *en route* from Anoopshahur, and Skinner was sent to escort it in.

Having met it, Skinner dispersed the greater part of his horsemen among the drovers, in order to keep them from straying or deserting, and with the remainder of his horse protected their rear.

At Kamoona the convoy was attacked by Doondhia Khan, but with only four hundred of his men Captain Skinner repelled and drove him back to the walls of his fort, inflicting a loss upon his force of nearly half their number. The convoy reached the grand army without a bullock missing, an exploit for which the Yellow Troop were publicly thanked by the Commander-in-Chief.

CHAPTER XII.

Ameer Khan.

First Scindhia, and then Holkar having been defeated, Ameer Khan, the great Pathan adventurer, came upon the scene.

After considerable success on the other side, Ameer Khan crossed the Jumna. The siege of Kamoona was at once raised, and Colonel Grüber retired under the walls of Allyghur, where General Smith came to his assistance, Skinner's Horse distinguishing themselves in the advance by cutting up to a man a "ghole" of three hundred sowars.

After this the "Yellow Boys" were ordered to Bareilly, where Ameer Khan's troops were besieging Mr. Leicester, and with much gallantry they effected their mission. But Ameer Khan himself it was impossible to catch; he was a very will-

o'-the-wisp, and kept the whole army marching backwards and forwards for a long time. At last Skinner discovered his real direction, and volunteered to General Smith to go in disguise to the enemy's camp and learn his intentions.

Accordingly, putting on native dress, Skinner, taking ten faithful sowars with him, and giving out that he was going to Moorshedabad on private business, started for Sherekote, and falling in with some of Ameer Khan's foragers, accompanied them into camp. Next day Skinner found that the enemy had fallen out, and the forces of Ameer Khan—Pindarees on the one side, Pathans on the other—ranged themselves for battle.

Seizing the opportunity, Skinner escaped from the camp, and urged General Smith to advance. The army at once struck its tents; but Ameer Khan had already got scent of the movement, and the British force came up with him only at Ufzulghur. The fight was a very bloody one, but the triumph complete. As the army was

retiring, it was seen that one of Skinner's galloper guns was left unprotected, and about fifty of Ameer Khan's sowars dashed out to capture it. They had all but secured it, when Lieutenant Robert Skinner, with twenty of his men, proceeded to its rescue, in personal combat cut down the leader of the enemy, and brought back the gun.

This very gallant action was performed in the sight of the whole British force, and as Lieutenant Skinner rode into the line, he was cheered by the British dragoons. For its conduct throughout this affair, Skinner's Horse was again thanked by Lord Lake, and General Smith was instructed to present a sword to Captain Skinner.

But it was with Sumbhul that the name of Robert Skinner is most gloriously connected. Ameer Khan had been chased to Mooradabad, and from there across the Ramgunga, towards, it was supposed, Bareilly. But after the affair of Ufzulghur, Robert Skinner had been despatched, with a detachment of five hundred horse, to Anoopshahur, and at Sumbhul he was

suddenly surprised by the whole army of Ameer Khan, who, with his magical activity, had doubled upon his pursuers, and Skinner's troopers were compelled to take shelter in an old fortified serai.

Ameer Khan first tried to bribe Robert Skinner's men to betray their commandant, but they received his offers with contempt. Ameer Khan then attempted to storm the serai, but was repulsed with loss. Again the disgraceful overtures were made, but the native officers brought the letter to Lieutenant Skinner, who put their fidelity to the test. "If," he said, "by giving up one life, that of five hundred can be saved, I am willing to go as prisoner to Ameer Khan;" and their reply, which should be blazoned on the banners of the corps, was this:—"You may go *after we have all been killed!*"

Skinner then wrote to Ameer Khan, taunting him with his vile conduct, and the result was a prolonged attack upon the serai, but with no success.

Bent, however, upon the massacre of the

brave detachment, Ameer Khan continued his attack, until Skinner was reduced to fearful straits. Food there was hardly any, powder very little, and ammunition none. The shoes were taken off the horses' feet, and slugs made from the metal. At the same time a messenger was despatched to Captain Skinner to apprise him of the desperate situation of his brother, and to ask him for reinforcements.

But General Smith would not allow him to proceed to his assistance, arguing that by this time either every man of the detachment was dead, or that Ameer Khan had been defeated by Colonel Burne's force, which was in the neighbourhood. Captain Skinner, helpless to render assistance to his brother in distress, determined to attempt strategy, and gloriously succeeded. He wrote a letter to Robert Skinner, saying that General Smith had ordered the whole army to move to his assistance, and that he would be relieved on the following morning; at the same

time urging him to keep Ameer Khan amused before the walls, in order that his defeat might be complete. This letter was given to a messenger, with instructions to fall into the hands of Ameer Khan's videttes; and the gallant fellow carried out his instructions well, for he allowed himself to be captured by an outpost, and carried before Ameer Khan.

The letter was found upon him and read, and great was the consternation in the camp. The whole British army was within a night's march! The order was at once given to strike the tents; but before the army could move, a village in the rear was seen to burst into flames, and the country-people, rushing into the camp, declared that Lord Lake was already upon them, for the Yellow Troop were firing the villages.

The truth was, that a few sowars had volunteered to assist Captain Skinner in carrying out his ruse, and by opportunely firing the village had corroborated the alarming letter received by Ameer Khan.

The terror of the Pathan was, however, complete, for he fled in confusion from before Sumbhul, leaving Robert Skinner and his gallant men as astonished as delighted, to make their way from the serai to the British camp in perfect safety.

The messenger who carried the letter and the sowars who assisted the stratagem were handsomely rewarded; and Robert Skinner and his detachment were specially thanked by the Commander-in-Chief, who sent a letter in Persian to the regiment, applauding them for the gallantry of their defence and the severe loss they had inflicted upon Ameer Khan. And thus ended this wonderful campaign.

In the chase after Holkar the army had gone five hundred miles, after Ameer Khan seven hundred, and Skinner's Horse was the only Hindustanee corps that was in active service throughout. During the whole time the men were eighteen hours out of the twenty-four in the saddle; and often in the chase after Ameer Khan, when they had the rear-guard, they

picked up the European dragoons knocked up, and, themselves dismounting, put them on their horses and brought them into camp. And thus it was that the "Yellow Boys" were as popular among their friends as they were dreaded by their enemies.

Ameer Khan by this time had crossed the Jumna, a ruined man in reputation, army, and means; and no enemies were left for the British to fight. The times grew wearily peaceful, for Scindhia and Holkar both pretended to come to terms, and at last came the order for the break-up of the force with which Skinner's Horse was serving.

Captain Skinner, on his way to Saharunpore, passed through Delhi, and here Colonel Ochterlony, the British Resident, inspected the corps, and after thanking it for its distinguished services, unbuckled his own sword, and in the name of Lord Lake presented it to Captain Skinner.

But very soon Holkar, with Ameer Khan's shattered forces, started for Lahore, marching through the Hurriana

country to enlist the assistance of Runjeet Singh, and in 1805, Lord Lake, re-forming the army, started in pursuit.

At the Sutlej the opinions of the military and political authorities (Sir John Malcolm) clashed as to the propriety of crossing into the territory of Runjeet Singh; but Lord Lake, taking the responsibility upon himself, ordered the "Yellow Boys" to lead the way across the river.

Captain Skinner made a short speech to his men, who with three cheers dashed into the Sutlej. The horses swam for a short distance, and then, feeling the bottom, scrambled on to an island in the middle of the river. It proved, however, to be a quicksand, so, cutting the fastenings of the galloper gun which they had taken with them, Captain Skinner ordered his men to proceed. They reached the shore; and then, having picketed the horses, returned, and in the sight of Lord Lake, his staff, and a number of officers who had assembled to see the achievement,

rescued the gun from the treacherous sand, and as it touched the firm soil, Skinner, taking off his hat, gave three cheers, in which Lord Lake and his staff joined, to proclaim the fact that a British gun had passed the Sutlej.

So pleased was Lord Lake at the manner in which this work was performed, that he ordered Rs. 2000 to be given to the men who went over with the gun.

Holkar, however, was far in advance; and, as the only chance of inflicting any loss upon him, Lord Lake ordered Captain Skinner to pursue him alone. At the Beas river the "Yellow Boys" found Holkar crossing, and after cutting up the detachment which had not yet passed over, captured a large convoy of grain and brought it back to Lord Lake; that is to say, after marching twenty miles with the army, Skinner's Horse advanced ten miles alone, cut up the rear-guard of Holkar's army, captured a convoy, and brought it into camp, having been absent about fifteen hours, and then proceeded with the

regular army on its march as if it had never left it!

When Lord Lake reached the Beas, he found Holkar ready to sue for peace; and after holding a grand review, at which Runjeet Singh was himself present in disguise, and which Sikhs to this day remember as the exhibition of a strength then undreamt of by them, turned homewards.

At Kurnaul the army was broken up; and though Skinner's Horse had been promised by Lord Lake *permanent* service, Sir George Barlow ordered the whole corps to be dismissed. When Skinner arrived, Lord Lake was at breakfast; but he was sent for, and, with tears in his eyes, his Lordship gave him the despatch from Sir George Barlow.

"I read it" (we quote Skinner's own narrative) "but said nothing; when Lord Lake, catching my hand, said: 'Skinner, I am very sorry indeed for it: what can I do for you?' 'My Lord,' I replied, 'the character you have given me will enable me to earn my bread, and some just man

may hereafter come to the head of affairs who will take me by the hand!' 'Well,' said Lord Lake, 'but how can I satisfy you now?' I replied that I should be content with a small *jagheer* (a grant of land) as I did not mean to again serve as a soldier unless obliged. He asked me how much would satisfy me and my brother Robert—would Rs. 20,000 a year satisfy us? I thanked him, and said he was making princes of us. Lord Lake laughed, and appointed jagheers of Rs. 5000 a year apiece to four of my *ressaldars*, pensioned all officers as low as *duffadars*, gave three months' gratuity to all the men, and placed the sick and wounded upon the Haupper establishment. I then took my leave, with a letter to the Collector of Coel for jagheers; and returning, brought the corps to Delhi, where the painful task awaited me of tearing myself from the men who had gained such laurels under the British colours. *All those who had deserted that service at first, and then came over to it, received rewards. Those only who had*

proved faithful all along were discharged from it."

These are bitter words; but Skinner meant them as he wrote, and to this day they remain true. But worse was yet to come, for Sir George Barlow cancelled the order for Skinner's jagheers, on the plea that, being British subjects, they could not hold land! At Delhi the "Yellow Boys" met, and Captain Skinner paid up his veterans and discharged them, settling himself at that place upon a captain's pension.

This miserable termination to a most brilliant career was not, however, to be, for when the Sikhs threatened trouble, Captain Skinner was ordered to raise three hundred horse, and, even after the danger had passed, to raise it to eight hundred. With this force, and a couple of galloper guns, Captain Skinner proceeded, in 1809, to the Hurriana country, where for five years they did their usual excellent service in dashing about the country and suppressing turbulent raiders. Amongst other

exploits, Skinner's Horse was present at the taking of Bhowanee, and in company with the 6th Native Cavalry charged the garrison who were making their escape.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAST DAYS OF SKINNER.

In 1814 Captain Skinner received an order to raise his force to three regiments of a thousand men each. With characteristic energy he immediately set about the work of recruiting; and by calling still further upon families already largely represented in his ranks, succeeded within a year in adding the twenty-two required ressalahs to his corps. The composition and organization of the force remained unaltered. It was a brigade of cavalry with the uniformity of a regiment.

In 1819 one regiment of Skinner's corps was paid off; the second, under Major Robert Skinner, was sent to Neemuch; while the Colonel himself, with the remaining thousand men, remained at Hansie. In the meantime the great desire of the

Skinners was accomplished. They had a little estate held in jagheer from Government, and it was one of the fondest objects of their ambition to obtain this in perpetuity. About this time their wishes were gratified, and the little *ilaqua* (village and land) became their own. But Robert Skinner did not live long to enjoy the fruition of his hopes, for he died in 1821. The next three years were passed in local service; when, in 1824, Colonel Skinner was suddenly ordered to raise another troop of eight hundred men, and almost immediately afterwards to raise the strength of each to one thousand sabres. This was done in a month and a half, all the original "Yellow Boys" flocking to the "Sekunder's" standard.

And we would here digress to note that Skinner's Horse, which, when first raised, was composed entirely of Syuds, Moghuls, and Pathans from the Doab and the neighbourhood, each man the relative of the other, has ever since been recruited from the same family circles, the traditions of

the corps being thus handed down from father to son, and brother to brother. At this day the men of Skinner's Horse are the descendants or relatives of the gallant fellows who, in 1803, elected "Sekunder" (Skinner) their captain, and defeated Madharao at Malaghur.

The command of the 2nd Regiment was given to Captain Martindale, but it had a brief career, being broken up in 1829. The uniform still remained yellow, but a picturesque addition was made in the shape of a short-sleeved spencer, edged with fur, and worn over the *alkaluk;* the *kakee** pyjamas were changed also to green cloth, and a steel helmet superseded the pugree. It was at this time that standards were presented to the regiment by General Reynolds, emblazoned with the Persian motto, "*Himmut murdan Muddut Khoda*" ("The bravery of man, but

* "Kakee" is a colour afterwards introduced into the service during the Mutiny and worn by European and native soldiers. Being a mud colour it is not easily distinguishable at a distance.

help of God"); a motto which corresponds singularly with Cromwell's "Trust in God and keep your powder dry."

Towards the close of 1825 the 1st Regiment marched for Bhurtpore. On their arrival at Muttra, five troops, under Major Fraser, were detached to Agra to join the column under Major-General Sir Jasper Nicholls, and five troops, commanded by Colonel James Skinner, proceeded with Lord Combermere's force towards Bhurtpore.

The site of this fortress is somewhat depressed, and this circumstance contributes, from a military point of view, in no small degree to its strength, as the water of a small lake in the vicinity can be discharged into the moat in such a volume as to render it unfordable.

On Lord Combermere's approach, therefore, the first thought of the enemy was to flood the ditch; and for this purpose a working party, strongly supported, was told off to cut the embankment which restrained the egress of the

water in the Motee Jheel towards the town. The work was in progress. Basket after basket full of earth was being removed, and the *bund* (raised embankment) which held the water was gradually diminishing in width. The water had actually commenced to flow, and in a few moments more the breach would have been irreparable, the advancing army checked, and Bhurtpore saved.

But at this critical moment the "Yellow Boys" appeared above the hill, their sabres flashed from their scabbards, Fraser with his troopers dashed upon the enemy, and the embankment was saved.

A desperate fight ensued. Twenty of Skinner's men lay dead or dying on the field; Major Fraser was wounded by a spear, and the brave Rajah, who led the enemy and fought with great gallantry, was killed in fierce combat with the sowars. Lord Combermere now invested the city, and the siege commenced in stern earnest.

During the siege, Skinner's Horse were

constantly employed on escort and forage duties, again and again winning admiration by the gallantry of their skirmishes with the enemy. On the 13th of January, 1826, Bhurtpore was taken by storm, and two troops of Skinner's Horse, dismounted, acted with the assaulting columns.

For these services Major Skinner was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and obtained the third class of the Order of the Bath—Lord Combermere presenting the veteran with his own insignia as Skinner's had not arrived. Ressaldars Amanat Khan, Zuberdust Khan, and Meer Bahadur were honourably mentioned for their "dashing gallantry," in Lord Combermere's despatches, and the regiment was permitted to bear on its standards and appointments the illustrious legend of "Bhurtpore."

The fall of this famous fort startled the neighbouring chiefs into submission, and the army of Lord Combermere was broken up, Skinner having the honour of entertaining his Lordship at his jagheer of Belaspore

before his departure ; and nothing memorable occurred in the history of the regiment until the year 1838, when, its strength having been augmented, it marched to Ferozepore to take part in the expedition to Afghanistan.

On its arrival at headquarters, the greater portion, under the command of Colonel Skinner, to their bitter disappointment, were sent back to Hansie, it being found that they were not required with the army of the Indus; but one ressalah accompanied Shah Soojah's force with Sir William Macnaughten to Candahar, and afterwards to Cabul ; and two ressalahs, under Captain Martindale, accompanied the first column of the army of the Indus as far as Dadur, in Cutch Guindawa. Captain Martindale, being taken very ill, was forced to return from Shahpore, and Captain Macpherson (afterwards commandant of the 3rd Regiment of the Gwalior Contingent Infantry) did duty with the detachment on its arrival at Dadur, and that right gallantly.

After some months of inaction on the frontier, Nuseer Khan, the young Khan of Khelat, assembled a large body of Brahooee rebels, and on the 29th of October (1839) attacked Dadur, when a detachment of Skinner's Horse, numbering only one hundred and twenty sabres, attacked them with desperate gallantry, and were completely victorious. The senior native officer and some ten sowars were killed, and as many more, besides Captain Macpherson, were wounded.

The following is the account of the famous Dadur charge, given in a letter to Colonel Skinner, dated, Dadur Khan, November 6th, 1840 :—"At the request of Captain Macpherson, who is wounded, I write to give you an account of the gallant conduct of your men on the 29th of October. The enemy issued out of the Bolan Pass in a body of about nine thousand strong, and pitched their camp within four miles of our cantonments, where they remained quiet all the 28th. On the morning of the 29th they began to

assemble, and at about half-past one four guns from their camp were fired as a signal for the attack, and they immediately advanced in two divisions of about four thousand each. In about an hour they came within reach of our six-pounders, and we opened fire upon them with good effect; but, undaunted, they advanced to within two hundred and fifty yards of our walls, under a heavy fire of small arms and artillery. About four o'clock we received orders to cease firing, as Skinner's cavalry, a hundred and twenty strong, under Captain Macpherson, were about to charge. A large body of about two thousand of the enemy was collected in our front, and many were concealed in a large cotton field within five hundred yards of our walls. On being charged, the enemy's cavalry fled at once. Captain Macpherson," continues the writer, "received a wound at the outset, and regrets that he was no longer with your men, and had no further opportunity of judging who distinguished themselves particularly, but he especially desires me

to bring to your notice the conduct of Naib Ressaldar Mahomed Hossein Khan, who, previous to the charge, used his utmost endeavours to excite his men, by bringing to their recollection former acts of gallantry. 'Now,' said he, 'is the time for you to distinguish yourselves; you are in the presence of Bombay troops. In your charge, prove to the Bombay soldiers that you are worthy of the character you bear in Bengal; recollect that you are "Skinner's Horse"!'"

On the 4th of December, 1841, died the illustrious officer whose name will be for ever associated with this regiment. Colonel James Skinner breathed his last at Hansie after a few days' illness. As pious as brave, as modest as distinguished, this really wonderful man had, in his life, engaged the sincere affection both of the men whom he commanded and of those under whose command he was; and in his death he was honoured as few men have been honoured. On the 17th of January, 1842, the remains of Colonel Skinner were

disinterred and escorted by the whole corps and a great crowd of men to Delhi, where, four miles from cantonments, they were met by every European in Delhi, and a great multitude of natives. "No emperor," said the natives, "was ever brought into Delhi in such state as the Sekunder Sahib." Colonel Skinner lies buried in the church he built himself, and by the side of his great friend, William Fraser.

After the death of Colonel Skinner the command of the regiment devolved temporarily upon Major B. Phillips; Major L. Smith being appointed in February, 1842.

But these were the piping times of peace, and Skinner's Horse found little to do. In the relief of 1842-43, the regiment marched to Neemuch, where it remained until the Punjaub Campaign of 1845-46, when it was ordered to the front; but on arrival at Hansie the campaign had concluded, and it returned to Neemuch. In 1847 four ressalahs were reduced, with a year's gratuity, the native officers being retained as supernumeraries until absorbed

or transferred; and in 1849 the corps marched to Lahore, Lieutenant C. Chamberlain joining it on the march as commandant, *vice* Smith resigned. At Lahore it remained inactive until 1852, when it was ordered up to Peshawur, and enjoyed a skirmish with Pindah Khan. Two years later the North-West Frontier medal fell to it for its presence, under Colonel Cotton, in the action against the Mohmunds. In 1856 it arrived at Jhelum; and while there, the order of the Government was published that all recruits should enlist for general service, and Skinner's Horse, probably disgusted with the persistent tranquillity of the times, volunteered to serve beyond seas, in any clime or country where their services might be required. For this loyal declaration the corps received the special thanks of Government. And then broke out the Mutiny—the terrible ordeal to which our native troops were put in 1857—an ordeal which so many failed to pass. Brilliant, however, among the exceptions was Skinner's Horse.

It was at Mooltan at the time, and the news of the outbreak at Meerut arrived in May. An unsettled spirit at once became manifest among the native garrison, and emissaries from the infantry regiments attempted to tamper with the loyalty of the "Yellow Boys."

But with little success. Skinner's Horse told them plainly, that not only would they not join them, but that if the infantry mutinied they would act against them, while information of the conspiracy was at once carried by the Woordie Major of Skinner's Horse, Meer Burkut Ullee,* to Major Chamberlain, by whom it was communicated to Sir John Lawrence. Sir John Lawrence at once issued orders for the disarming of the mutinously inclined regiments, and this dangerous measure

* This faithful soldier died at Cawnpore on the 8th June, 1872, from the effects of a fall from his horse while mounting to go on parade—an excellent native officer, a staunch supporter of the Government, and a true friend to all. His loss will long be felt in the regiment, and by none more so than his commanding officer, William Alexander.

was successfully carried out on the 11th of June. For their share in this coup, Meer Burkut Ullee was presented by the Punjaub Government with a *khillut* of Rs. 500, and Naib Ressaldar Shidad Khan with one of Rs. 200, while the thanks of Sir John Lawrence were conveyed to the corps for their conspicuous loyalty.

In September an insurrection broke out among the Moolleh Jhats in the neighbourhood of Mooltan, and the Commissioner wrote for the assistance of Skinner's Horse.

A detachment of eighty men, under Ressaldar Illahee Buksh Khan, accordingly proceeded to Harruppa, where the treasury had been looted, and the tehseeldar carried off by the rebels.

But the strength of the enemy had been under-estimated, and the next day Major Chamberlain proceeded with reinforcements to the assistance of the detachment. Severe skirmishing ensued ; but the rebels gathered in such overwhelming numbers, that the two hundred "Yellow Boys" had

to take refuge, on the 23rd of September, in the old serai of Cheechawutnee, where they were furiously besieged by some ten thousand rebels.

For two days, however, the gallant troop held out, without food for man or beast; and on the 25th were relieved by the sudden appearance of Colonel Paton with his movable column.

During the next two months the excellence of this corps was very marked; for to the harassing work of establishing order in a large and disaffected district, they brought their incomparable dash and that wonderful power of sustaining personal fatigue which had so often evoked the admiration of friends and foes.

After the suppression of the Mutiny, the Government of India notified its intention of summarily dismissing from its service all the men of native regiments who, during the Mutiny, had been absent from their respective corps, and who could not, on rejoining, prove satisfactorily that they

had been friendly towards us during the interval of absence. Nearly two hundred of Skinner's Horse were absent from the corps when the Mutiny broke out. Here and there, as the opportunity was offered them, small parties of the absentees joined the nearest British force; but a large proportion were unable to prove their active loyalty, and the order of Government was therefore made applicable to them. Sir John Lawrence, however, arrived at Mooltan soon after peace had been restored, and collecting the commissioned officers of the corps, asked them what boon he could grant them for their good services, and they asked that the absentees might be allowed to return to their corps. The request was granted, and upwards of a hundred of their old comrades were welcomed back by Skinner's Horse.

In January of 1859, Skinner's Horse assisted in the pursuit of rebels towards Bikaneer, returning to cantonments at Jullundhur. While they were here, the order was published by which the designa-

tion of the Irregular Cavalry was changed to that of "Bengal Cavalry." And in 1867 the command of this distinguished regiment fell to Colonel Alexander.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

In 1876 Colonel Alexander retired from active service with the rank of Major-General.

Always of a high moral inclination, he is proud to relate that early in his retirement he became dissatisfied with the absence in himself of that decidedly Christian character he had for many years seen in his beloved wife.

It is, then, not surprising that at Brighton, in 1879, he determined to declare his allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, and on their twenty-ninth wedding-day he communicated his resolve to Mrs. Alexander, to her great joy.

The happy pair thereupon laid the

remainder of their lives, spared from so many perils, at the feet of the King of kings, to be used by Him in service and for His cause.

They did not attempt this by seeking the circles of the great; but retiring to Burgess Hill, in Sussex, they devoted themselves to the spiritual and temporal needs of the poor, chiefly those who seemed outside the range of any existing Christian agency.

A small room was the confined sphere in which their first efforts were made, but soon at a spot where three or four roads meet, some miles from nowhere, an iron building was erected and called the North End Mission Room.

When the writer first visited this place his inquiry was: "Where do the people come from?" For scarcely a cottage could be seen.

However, a long time before the service commenced, men in smock frocks, labourers, and women with children appeared over the hills from miles around

to prove that the mission hall provided a need that really existed.

Hundreds of people have heard the story of God's love to mankind through the instrumentality of General and Mrs. Alexander; and as the hall is over two miles from Burgess Hill, and there are two services every Sunday, eight miles had to be traversed by these devoted Christian people. Of course they did not—could not—both walk the whole distance each time, but there were very few exceptions. Moreover, walking did not complete the day's task for anyone, for both the General and his wife took regular duties for the comfort of the people.

There were also "extras." One Sunday we walked down to the mission hall through a white country mist, the trees and hedges being covered with crystal rime, and the weather biting cold.

On arrival at our destination we found the place full of smoke. Someone had attempted to light the stove with green wood. The windows and doors being shut,

of course the place was suffocating, and country people affected with chronic asthma and bronchitis would be *hors de combat* in the briefest moment in such an atmosphere. Moreover, the fire was not burning and the room was cold.

All this could not daunt our venerable friend and his resourceful wife. Had they been West End sybarites—as they might have been—they would have ordered "James" to drive them home at once, but having the love of God and the poor in their hearts, they grappled with the difficulty, and Mrs. Alexander was soon down at the stove clearing it out and relighting the fire, while we all, after opening the windows to release the smoke, were busy for some time with handkerchiefs or dusters wiping over the seats.

On another occasion we reached the hall to find that a small oil lamp, which was used to keep the organ warm, had been lighted and turned up too high.

The whole place stank, while seats, books, desk, and all things were covered

with "blacks." These vile sooty drops hung in the air like a pestilence, and it was only after great labour and much coughing that we rescued the place.

And these people who have spent their lives in their country's service, did they murmur? No, they laughed heartily at the experience, and often since have we all laughed at these matters as if they had been the greatest fun.

. . . . .

"John Anderson, my Jo, John,
We've climbed the hill together,
And many a cantie day, John,
We've had with one another,
Now we must totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go."

So sang Burns, and he could not have more beautifully depicted the two happy people whose story we have been telling—save that they are not tottering down.

If ever there was a beautiful eventide of life it is to be found with General Alexander and his wife.

Simple, happy, devoted lovers and

friends. May your eventide, dear reader, be like unto theirs.

This story is not intended to enshrine new heroes but to introduce dear friends. Truly they are lovely and pleasant in their lives. The world cannot find better illustrations of godly, happy old age. God grant that they may be spared many years yet to each other, and to the service of mankind.

They have served their country with a loyalty that has known no wavering. They still serve their fellows by proclaiming "peace on earth and good will to men," the message of the God of Peace whose peace "passeth all understanding."

Our only comment is: "Go thou and do likewise."

THE END.

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